

# MORE VINTAGE YEARS OF Airfix Box Art

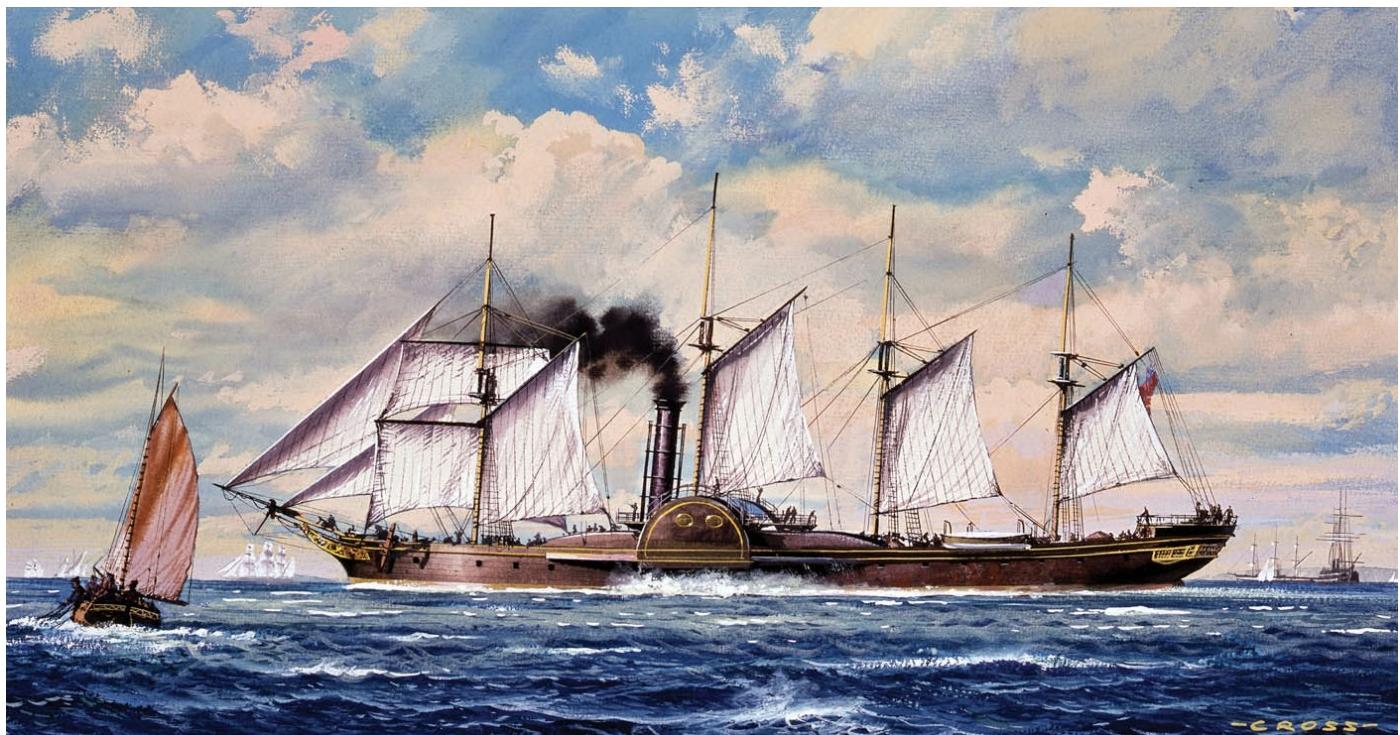




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# Airfix Box Art

Roy Cross





-CROSS-



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## *Acknowledgements*

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HIS BOOK would not have been possible in its present form without the unstinting cooperation of Mr Darrell Burge, Marketing Manager at Hornby Hobbies Ltd. Similarly I am indebted to Jeremy Brook, editor of *Constant Scale*, journal of the Airfix Collectors' Club, who in the course of his research at Hornby/Airfix has located many new transparencies of my artwork that have considerably enhanced the contents herein, and includes a number, especially of vintage cars, that I hadn't even remembered painting! As always my son Anthony and daughter-in-law Lizzy have helped me in preparing the text for the publishers and Ken Smith has proffered a helping hand. I admit to referring frequently to Arthur Ward's fine books on Airfix to refresh my memory, and offer him my thanks. Thanks are also due to the staff at Crowood with whom, over several books, it has always been a pleasure to work.

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Page 1: Brunel's trans-Atlantic steamer, the *Great Western*.

Page 2: The Vought A-7A Corsair II, a US Navy carrier-based light attack aircraft.

Page 3: The Hawker P.1127, forerunner of the Harrier.

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*A SAM-2 ‘Guideline’ missile and its carrier; this was a standard Soviet surface-to-air guided missile, serving from 1957.*

# *Introduction*

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**I**N MY previous book, *The Vintage Years of Airfix Box Art*, I was able to give a comprehensive chronological sequence of the box-top art I painted over some ten years for Airfix Products Limited in the 1960s and 1970s. The book's intent was to reproduce the artwork in full, rather than attenuated and disfigured (from the artist's point of view) by the necessary titles and logos. I cannot say this drawback worried me when I was originally producing the artwork because – all importantly for a freelance illustrator – there was a constant supply of work over a long period and with reasonable remuneration! Many people have said then and since that they would like to have enjoyed the complete, unadulterated artwork: this was one of the incentives to produce *Vintage Years*.

The earlier book was well received, and since much artwork from those years was unused, the thought persisted of producing another volume to complete the job and fill in the numerous gaps between the subjects already covered. Years ago I had trawled through the photo files then held at Airfix subsidiary Humbrol Ltd, I thought at the time comprehensively. But more recent research at Hornby/Airfix by Jeremy Brook, who is their unofficial archivist, uncovered transparencies that I thought had been lost for ever (like the original artwork). Hence this present volume, which I think gives a fresh and even more comprehensive survey of the tremendous and varied output of kits produced by Airfix in its vintage heyday.

I recount elsewhere how I had seen the bagged Airfix plastic kits in Woolworths, had known I could do much better and approached them to offer my talents. The product output in those prolific years posed all sorts of new challenges for the artist illustrator and, as I have already said, I felt I was being well paid to learn as I went along! Of course I had done a good deal of previous colour work for various clients and, rather than repeat too much biographical detail already covered in my previous books from Crowood, the next few pages give pictorial samples of this work, plus a few notes highlighting the background and experience I was able to present to Airfix.

The artwork is presented in roughly the sequence of my invoices as submitted over the years. This provides a great variety of illustrations throughout the book, which I hope will give enhanced interest as the pages are turned – hopefully something for everyone.



*The first Boulton Paul Defiant kit was issued in 1960; later I did two finished pieces of art in sequence, this I think being the second, the idea being to freshen up the presentation for new potential sales.*

# *Before Airfix*

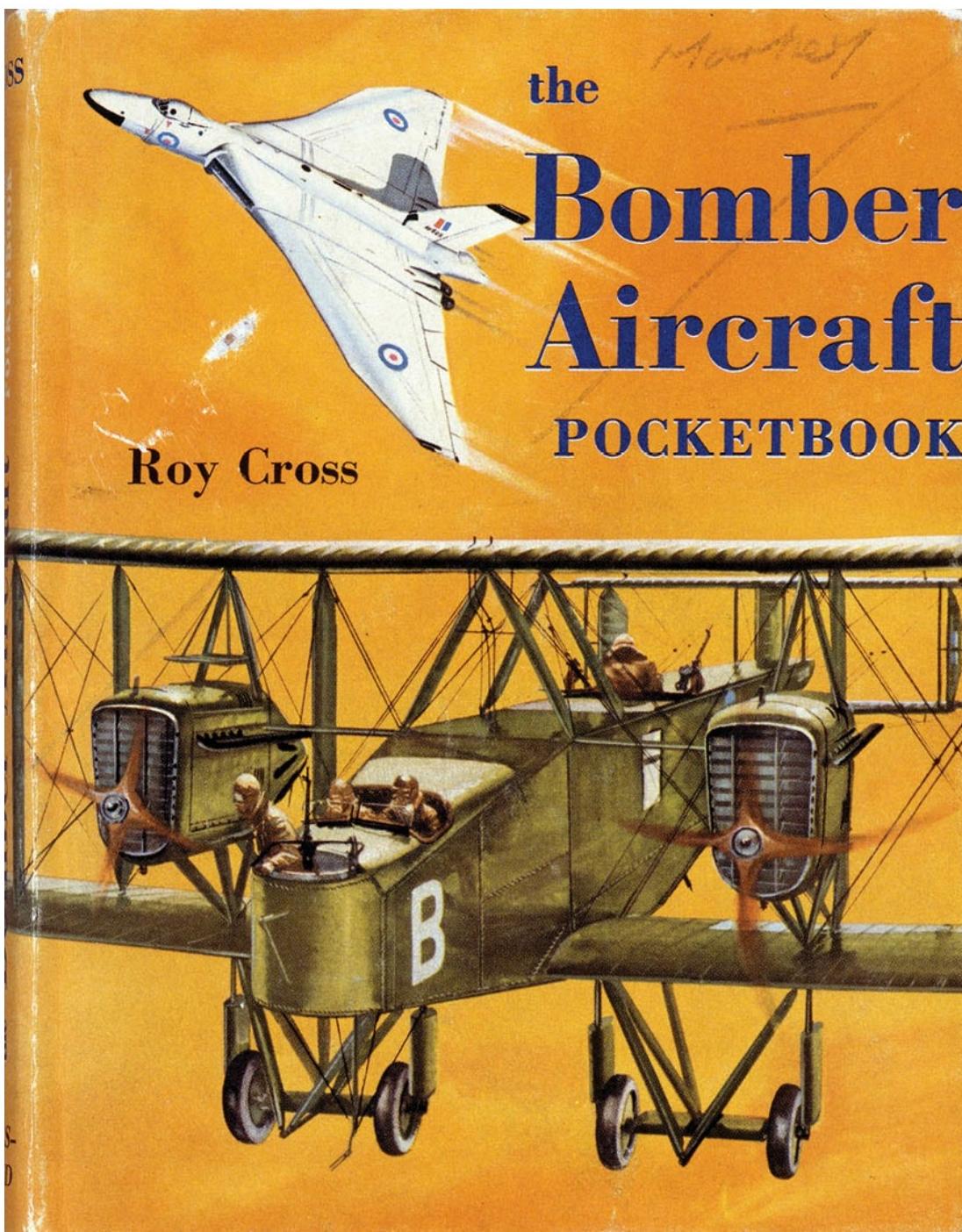
WHEN I approached Airfix in late 1963, I already had some twenty years' experience as a freelance illustrator/artist with work reproduced in print. As an Air Cadet in 1942 I sent some of my line drawings of aircraft to the Corps periodical: the editor, Leonard Taylor, asked to see me and show him some more of my work. The upshot was my supplying an increasing number of suitable drawings to illustrate the articles in the *Air Reserve Gazette*. I was paid £1 per reproduction, a useful sum in those days to augment my weekly salary as a technical illustrator at aircraft manufacturer Fairey Aviation Ltd at Hayes in Middlesex. Before long, I increased my earnings by submitting my own illustrated articles, using information culled from other aircraft manufacturers' press releases and from *Jane's All the World's Aircraft*. Upon writing as a budding journalist to the firms' press officers, I obtained releasable data and photographs to augment my own drawings and typescript. It amazes me that, with the battle of the Atlantic raging, large envelopes with superb 10 × 8in glossy aircraft photos arrived from the USA to illustrate my writing and later augment the *Gazette*'s files.

My career path seemed to have already decided itself, and after the war I joined a commercial art studio in London to learn my trade – including the mysteries of the de Vilbis airbrush – while continuing my freelance work. Because of the war, my education had been cut short and I had no formal art training, and day attendance at two prestigious art colleges in the early 1950s soon confirmed that, apart from useful tips about the techniques of the various media, they could not teach me what I wanted to know in the technical and manufacturing fields that were my main interest.

At Fairey, I had trained as a technical artist doing mechanical drawings in perspective for the various aircraft manuals (pilot's notes, repair illustrations and so on). My first full cutaway sectioned drawing (of the Firefly fleet fighter) was produced in the drawing office, inspired by the superb similar work published in *Flight* and *The Aeroplane* by such luminaries as Max Millar and Jim Clark. Some of my early efforts in the *Air Reserve Gazette* were praised by the editor and readers, thus opening up fresh possibilities for commissioned work from various aviation periodicals. These technical drawings were not confined to aviation subjects: I remember doing milk bottling machinery, electric lifts and subsequently more illustrative work for car handbooks, motorcycle magazines, indeed anything that came to hand to develop my skills.

Some aviation illustrations for the famous *Aeroplane Spotter* led to an introduction to *The Aeroplane*. Jim Clark and others were working flat out for the periodical,

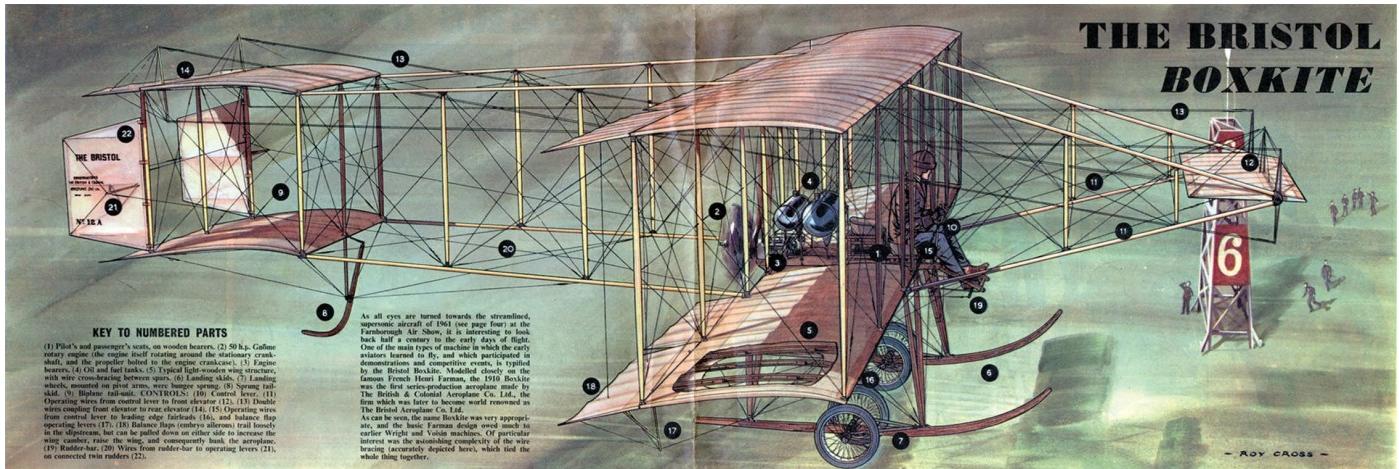
highlighting the many new aeroplanes and engines produced post-war by an industry turning over to civilian aviation. As a freelance, I was called in to fill the gaps. Representing the prestigious *The Aeroplane* afforded a minor VIP status: paid hotels, chauffeured cars, meals with the top brass; in all, a considerable boost to my morale and an insight as to how the higher echelons of industry carried on their business. For example, I was fortunate on one of these visits to meet Joseph Smith, who throughout the war had steered the Spitfire through a huge development programme at Supermarine to keep it ahead of ever-improving versions of the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and the Focke-Wulf 190, and post-war into the jet age.



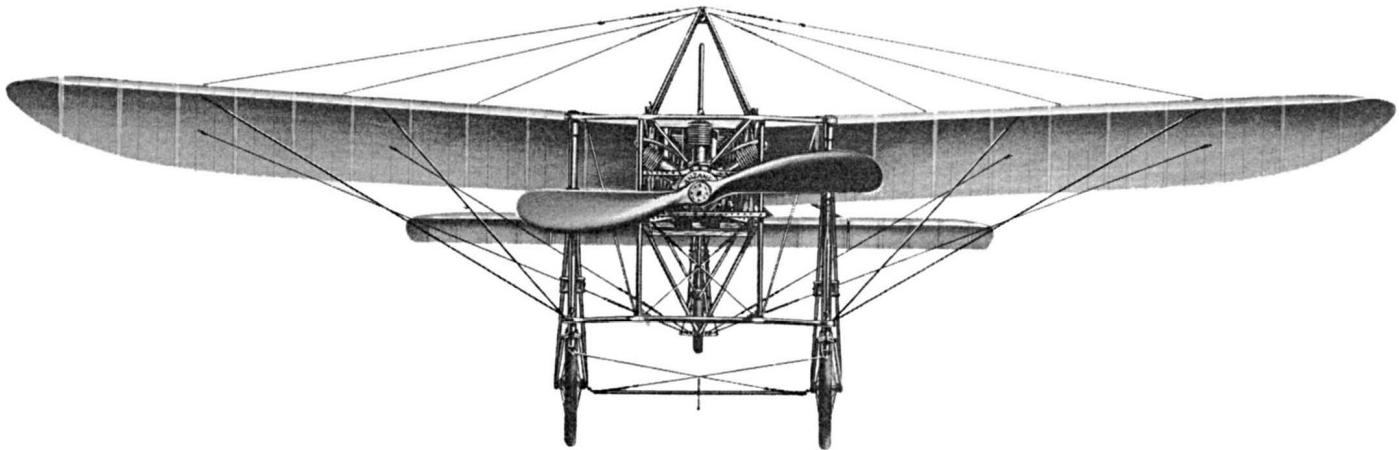
*Cover art for one of the several books I did in the 1960s.*



*The 14 July 1962 issue of Swift featured this cover of the Supermarine Scimitar fleet fighter and an article on test pilot Mike Lithgow.*



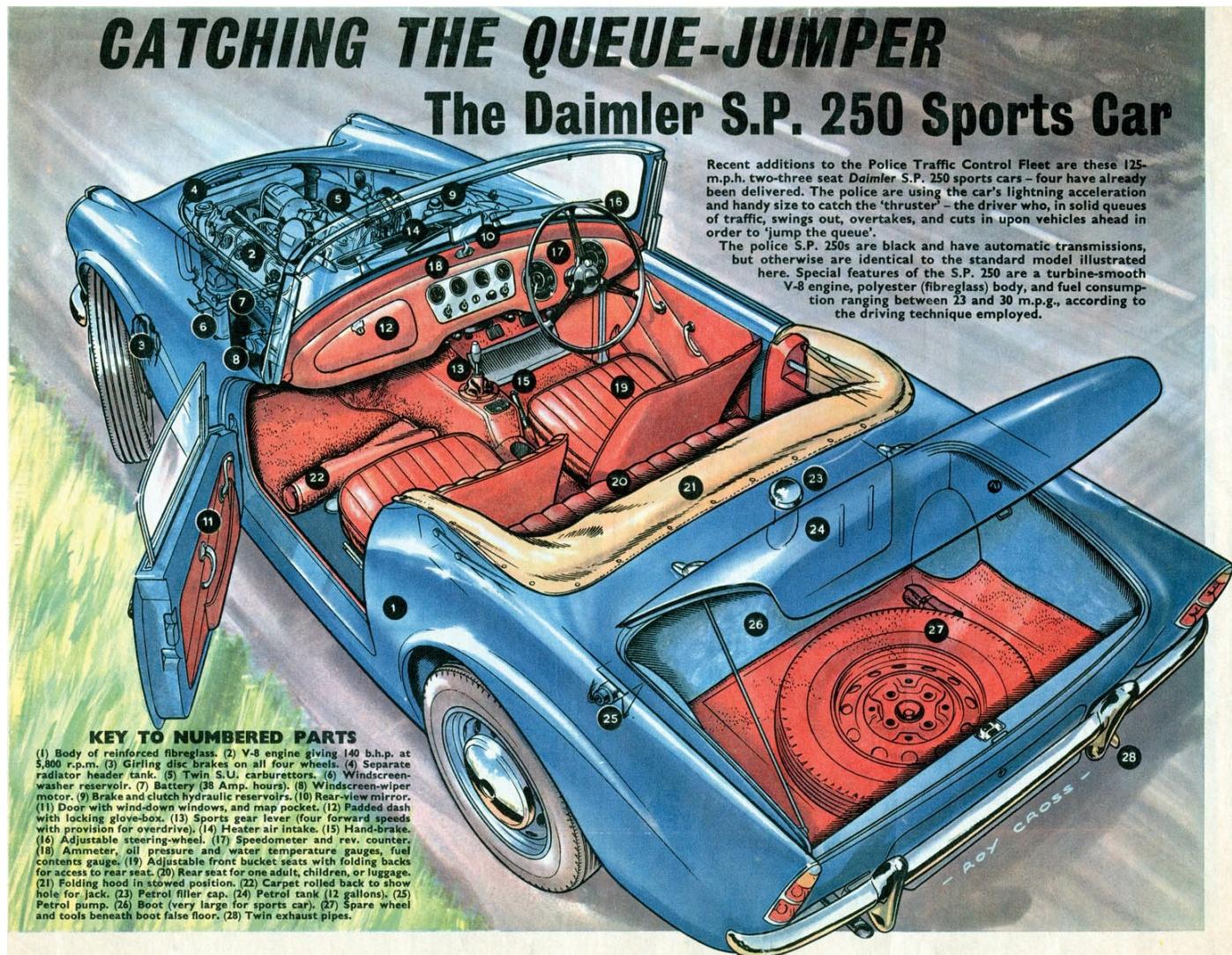
*One of a number of sectioned views done for Eagle and, below, front view of the Blériot XI in which Blériot made the first cross-Channel flight in 1909, from another 1960s book.*



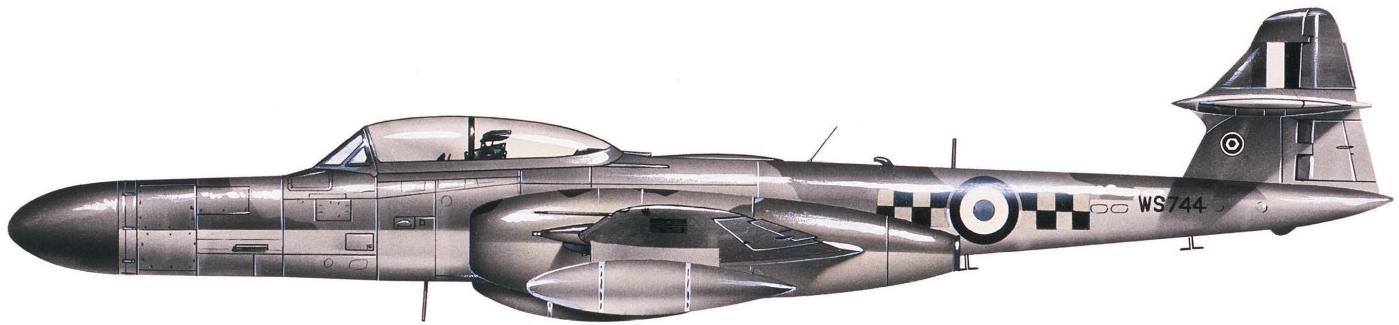
Between times, the work was coming in from what became *Air Pictorial* (an offshoot of the old *Gazette*), sectioned views for the Blackburn Bombardier manual, a series of cutaways for the Routemaster London omnibus, *Air Trails* and *Aviation Week* in the USA, the *RAF Review* and work for BEA. A ground-breaking commission was from Shell-Mex to illustrate the book *Know Your Airliners*: twenty-eight full-colour paintings of famous civil aeroplanes, and then a set of album cards for Brooke-Bond illustrating 'The History of Aviation'. There were books too, some of which I wrote and illustrated myself: *Supersonic Aircraft*, *Early Aeroplanes* and *Military Aircraft 1939–1945*, a plate from which is the Republic Thunderbolt on [The Box Art](#).

Apart from the cutaway line drawings, I was becoming accomplished in colour work, as for the Shell-Mex book, and increasingly my attention and ambition turned toward the colour advertisements in the aviation trade press, especially by that doyen of aeroplane and car art, Frank Wootton, who inspired so many other illustrators. Technical cutaway drawings were tedious and hard on the eyes and there seemed to be the prospect of increasing earnings, so I introduced my work to various advertising agencies. Hawker

was one of my first clients, via their agency, and I began to think I had finally made the big time! Being a member of the Society of Aviation Artists spurred me on, there meeting already established artists like David Shepphard, John Young, Gerald Coulson and of course Frank Wootton. Luckily I still had other work; perhaps because of the decline of Britain's aircraft industry, lucrative advertising commissions lessened and went only to the long-established experts in the field. Such are the ups and downs of the freelance existence.

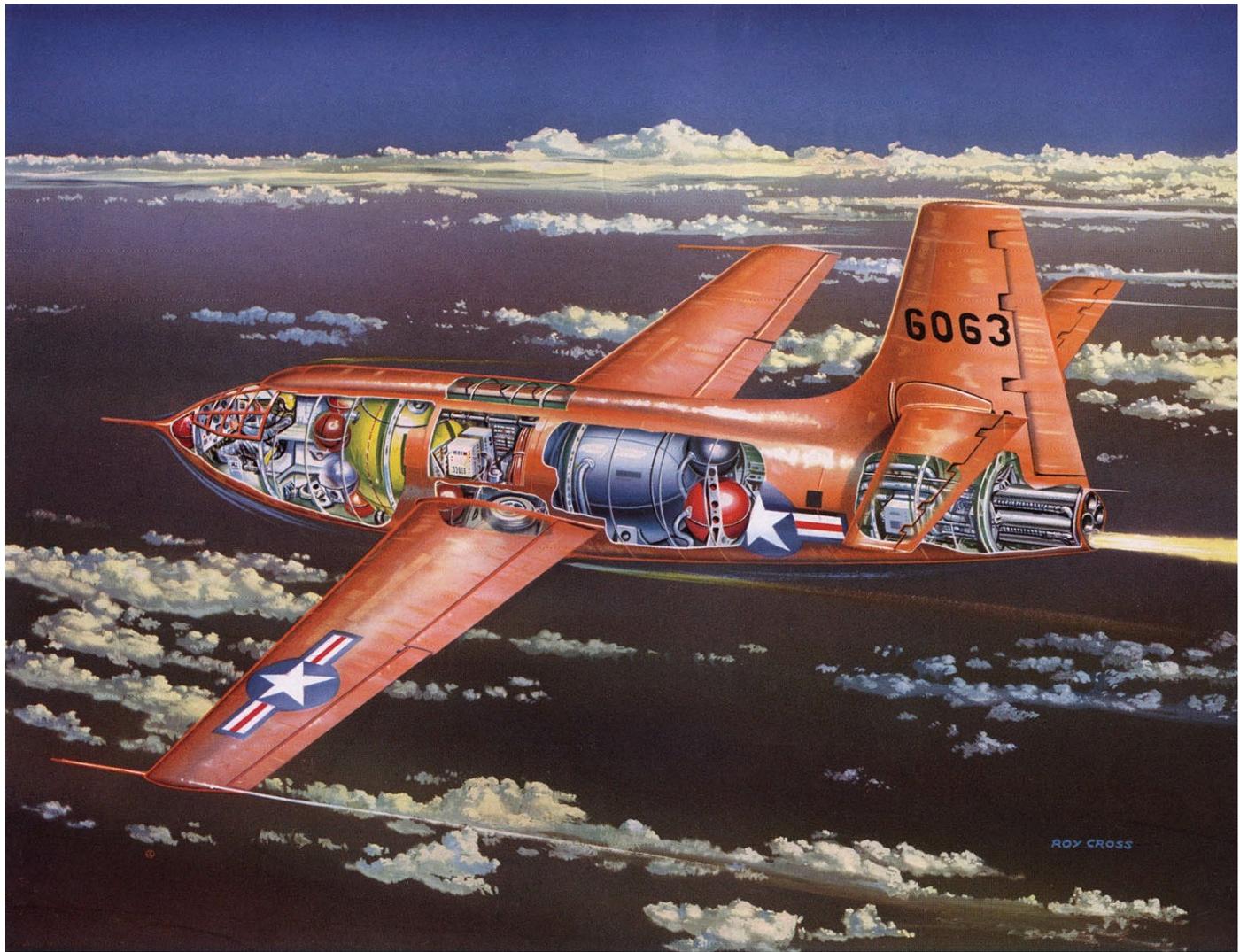


Another cutaway view for Eagle; and, below, a side view of the Gloster Meteor NF.14 night fighter from The Jet Aircraft of the World.



At the same time, however, came a long series of cover art for the famed youngster's publication *Eagle*, featuring famous racing and sports cars; this was a new field for me, but I had to adapt to new subjects and opportunities. These went so well that along came a series of aeroplane covers, this time for the companion magazine *Swift*. I was working flat out for a year, before first one and then the other changed editorial policy, and I was looking for work again.

I have related before how, looking in Woolworths one day, I espied the Airfix plastic kits, packed in transparent bags with an illustrated titled header, mostly of aircraft models. The headers had coloured line artwork. I knew I could do better and wrote to Airfix to tell them so, with samples of my pictures. I was invited up to see Managing Director John Gray and Chief Buyer Charles Smith, and came away with an order for artwork for the Dornier Do 217 as a preliminary. Obviously they were both satisfied with the result for more work followed and eventually led to an enjoyable ten-year association, which only ended when their work began to tail off and I decided to pursue an entirely different field in marine fine art.



*A plate from Supersonic Aircraft, which I wrote and illustrated myself, showing the early Bell X-1 in which 'Chuck' Yeager 'kicked it up to Mach 1.04' on 14 October 1947 for the first true supersonic flight.*



*Racing cars were a new subject for me when Longacre Press commissioned a series of 'Kings of the Road' covers for Eagle. Here is Dan Gurney in the 8-cylinder Porsche Formula One car of 1962. This experience came in handy illustrating the Airfix car kits.*

## *The Box Art*

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THE COMMON commercial art medium in the 1960s and 1970s, and the one I used, was gouache: water-based tube colour with a gum arabic binding and opaque filler, giving good hiding power, great lasting qualities and brilliant colours. As a fine art medium it dates back at least to the fifteenth century, and its light-fastness and longevity can be assured. At least one previous Airfix artist used oil colours, doubtless because that was what he was used to, but I liked the speed of application, drying time and cleanliness of the water-based colours. Heavy application, though, could crack so it was common to use watercolour boards, and I had my favourite 'Arches' paper glued to a stiff backing to my own specification.

The Airfix basic packaging was oblong in shape but with a segment intruding into the lower right-hand side, making a somewhat restricted area for the artwork. Certainly with aircraft it made it difficult to give a variety of 'poses' without cutting off a wing or other portion of the subject. This always posed a problem over ten years of work and it was frustrating to note that some package styles were later altered to a much squarer area long after I had gone. Even so, as time went on, I extended my picture area to give a much better composition just for my own satisfaction and I hope this is evident here, where usually the full picture area is presented.

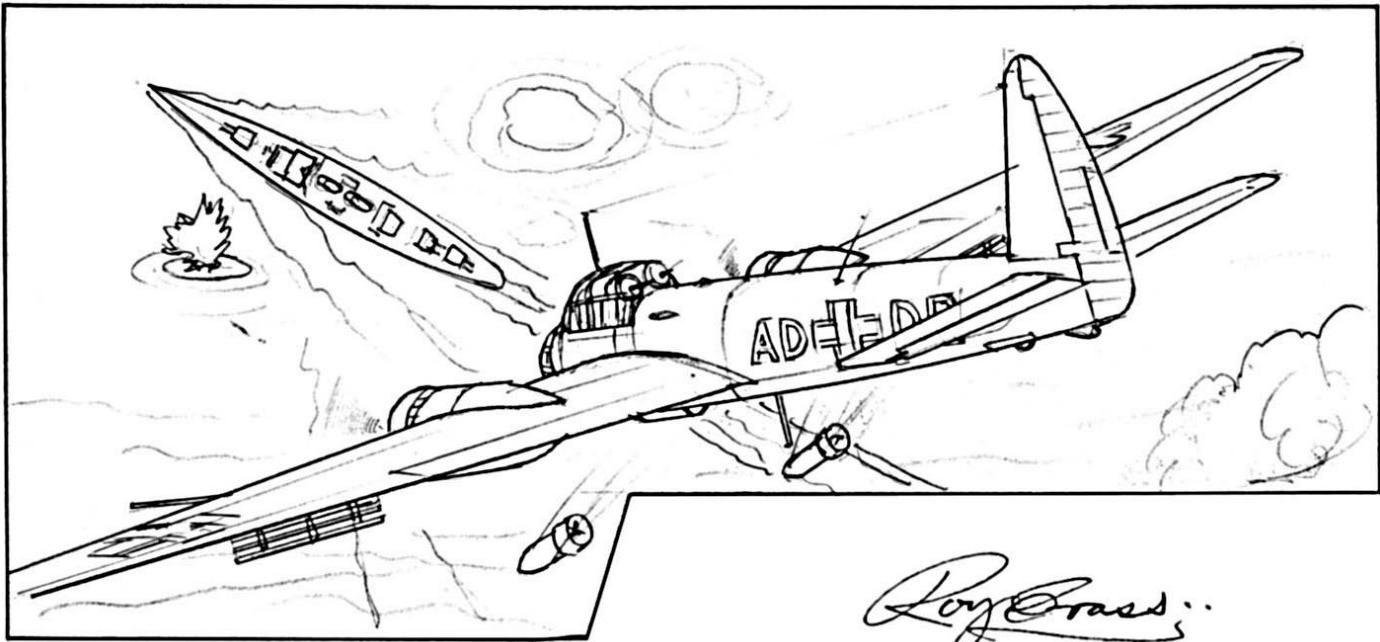
As a newcomer to Airfix I was asked to provide two or three pencil ideas or 'roughs' for the first commission, the Dornier Do 217, followed by a colour study of the selected sketch. This being approved, the full colour work went ahead. The next thing I saw was the finished box in its unfolded proof state, so there was no chance to comment on or correct any colour faults. In my opinion colour printing was not of the best quality in those days – but then again, I have never met an artist who was wholly satisfied with his work in reproduction! However, this was a new standard for the company and obviously they were pleased because the Dornier was only the first of two or three hundred finished paintings, sketches and other pieces done over ten years for the company.



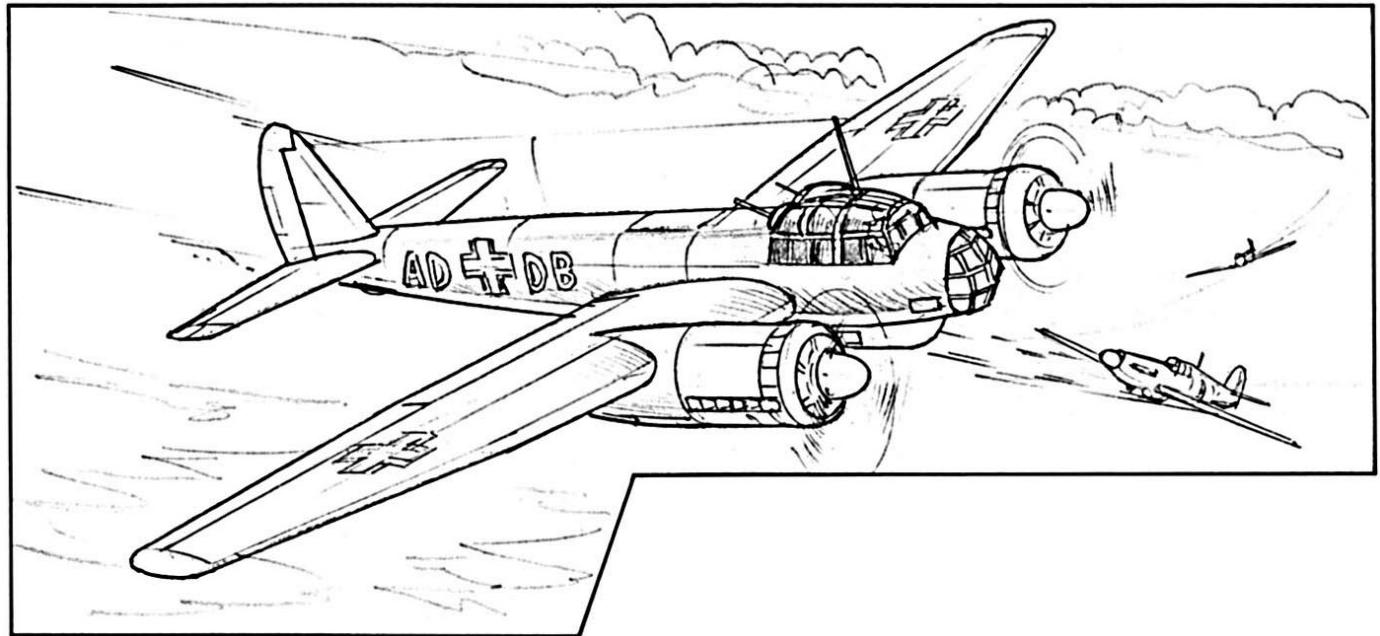
*The Bristol Superfreighter was made famous by its use on a car-carrying service between Britain and the Continent by such carriers as British United (the Airfix model markings) and Silver City Airways.*



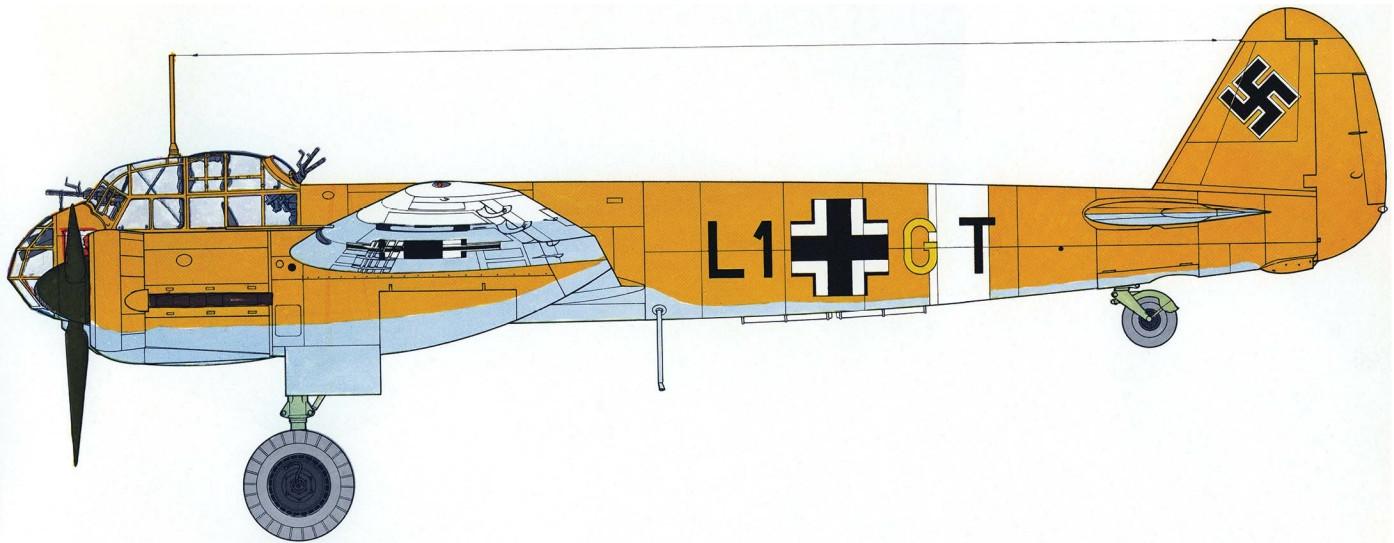
*The Curtiss P-40E Kittyhawk art was completed in May 1964 along with the Grumman Wildcat fighter. It was later replaced by a 'sanitized' version: the action background was airbrushed out for one particular market. This happened to much of my work after I left Airfix, so another hand was then applied to the background on this and various other paintings.*



*Roy Grass..*



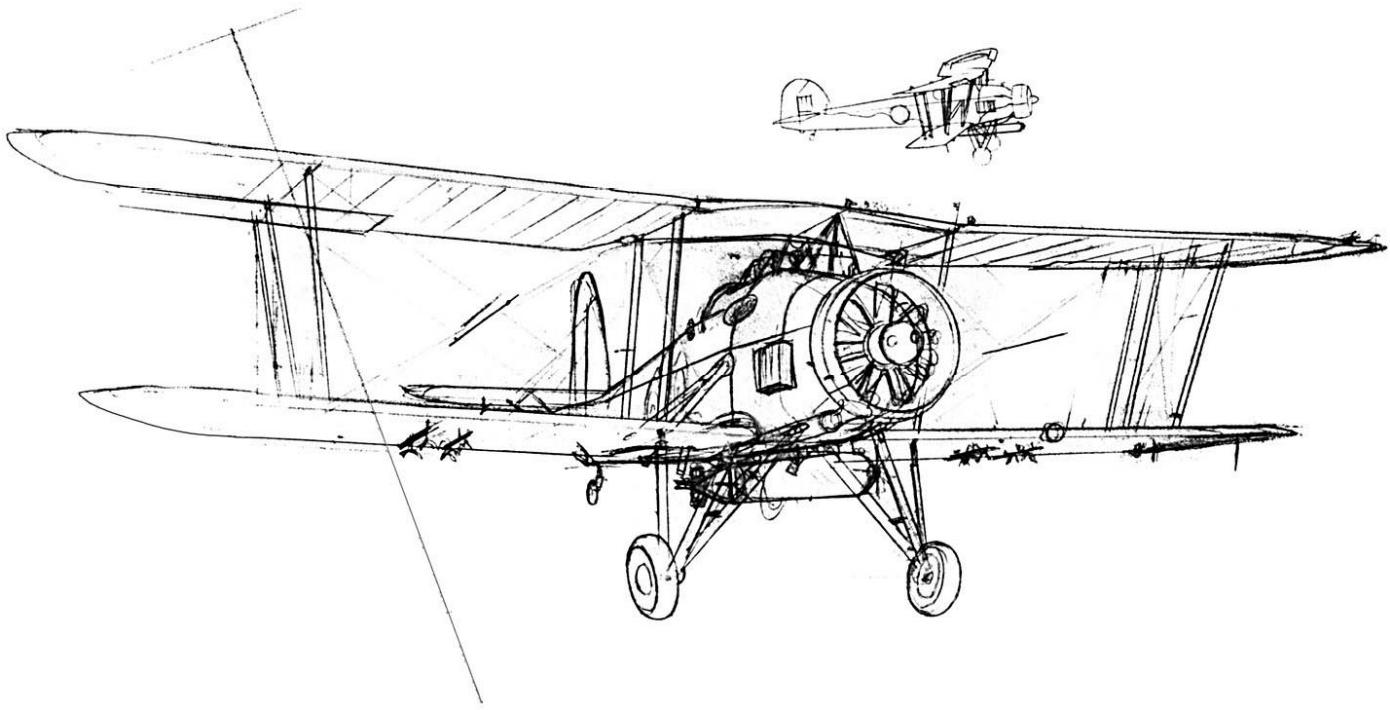
The Junkers Ju 88 was completed about the same time as the P-40E and is another example of later 'sanitization' (the original version appears in Celebration of Flight). Some clever Airfix design work was required on the transparent faceted nose section and cockpit canopy. Top is the accepted 'rough', although the final painting was slightly altered, and below is an alternative sketch, which was turned down. The first sketch was accepted as more suitable because it accentuated the Ju 88's dive-bombing role.



*A plate from my Military Aircraft 1939–1945 of a Ju 88A-4 Trop. of 9 Staffel, III Gruppe of the Lehrgeschwader 1, North Africa 1942.*



*Action and excitement were the watchwords for the box art to entice purchasers away from offerings by other kit manufacturers, so I went all out on the Fairey Swordfish. The preliminary 'doodle' below proved not to fit into the attenuated box top area, but emphasizes the preliminary work required before arriving at the finished art. On that account it was not even submitted to the management.*



BATTERY OPERATED

# AIRFIX ELECTRIC SPEEDBOAT



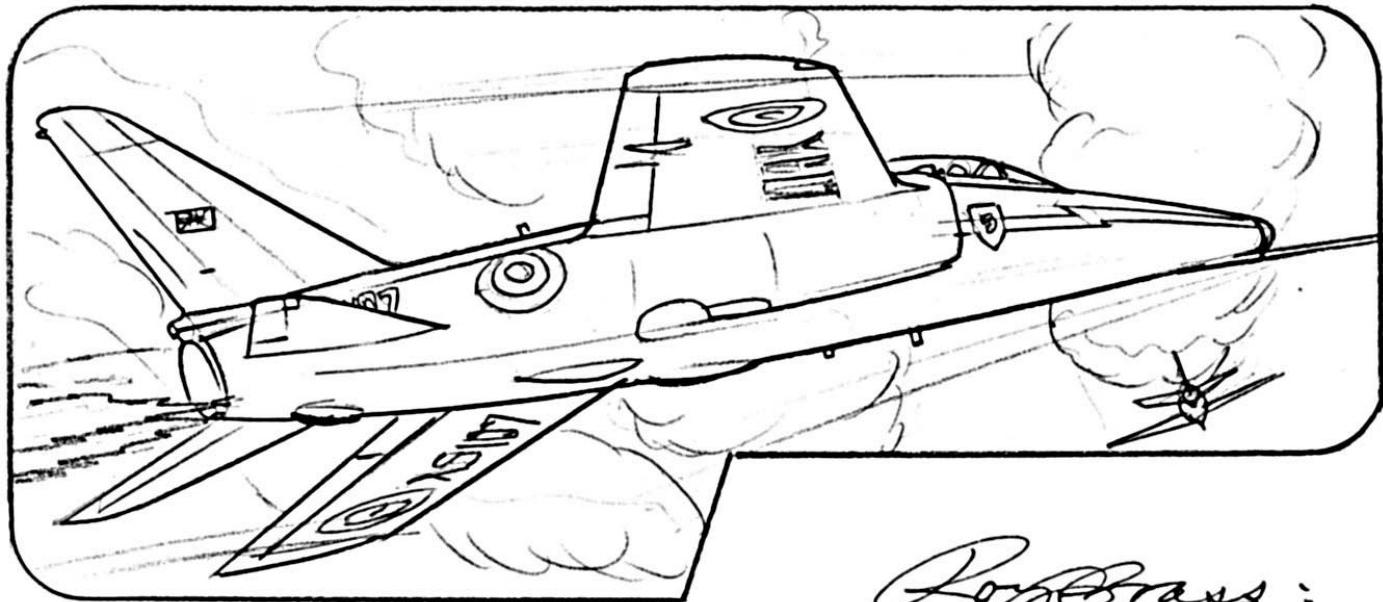
- ★ POWERFUL MOTOR
- ★ POLYTHENE HULL
- ★ 4.5 VOLT BATTERY
- ★ ADJUSTABLE RUDDER



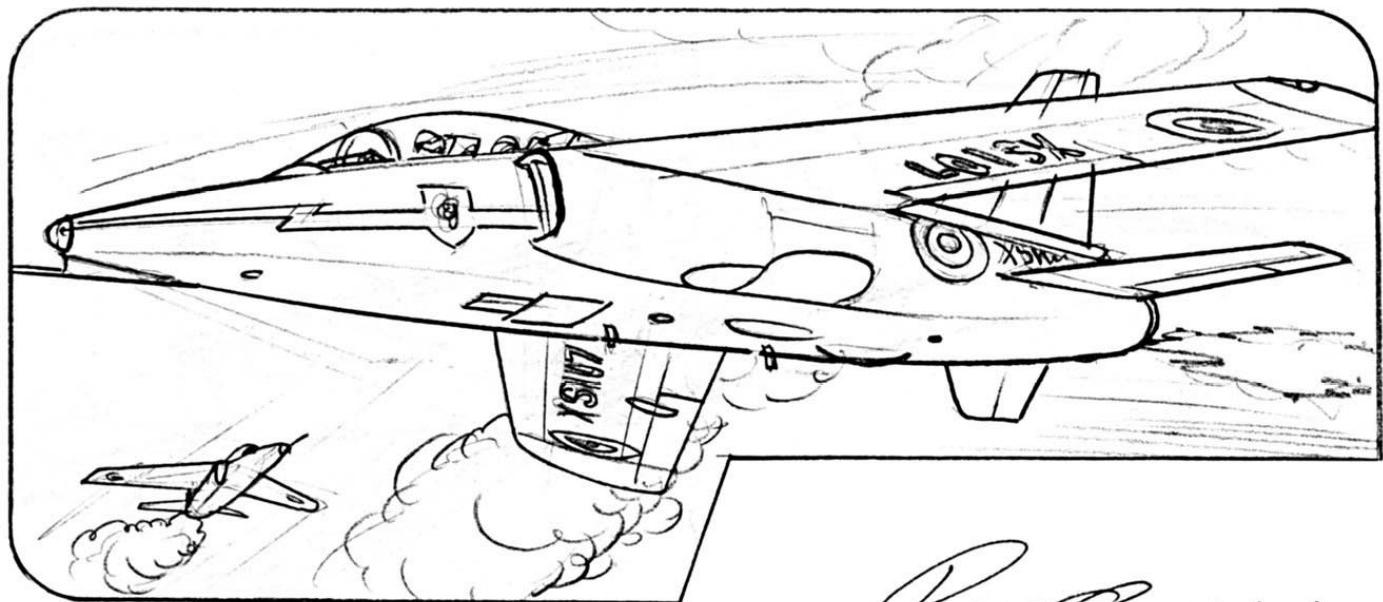
**AIRFIX**  
**ELECTRIC**  
**SPEEDBOAT**  
*Roy Cross*  
**BATTERY OPERATED**

Emphasizing the increasing variety of work from Airfix, this illustration of the Electric Speedboat was done the same time as the Ju 88. The actual box top is reproduced here as no transparency, let alone the original artwork, has come to light – I imagine that, should an original item emerge, it would fetch a good sum from an

*Airfix collector.*



*Roy Gross:*



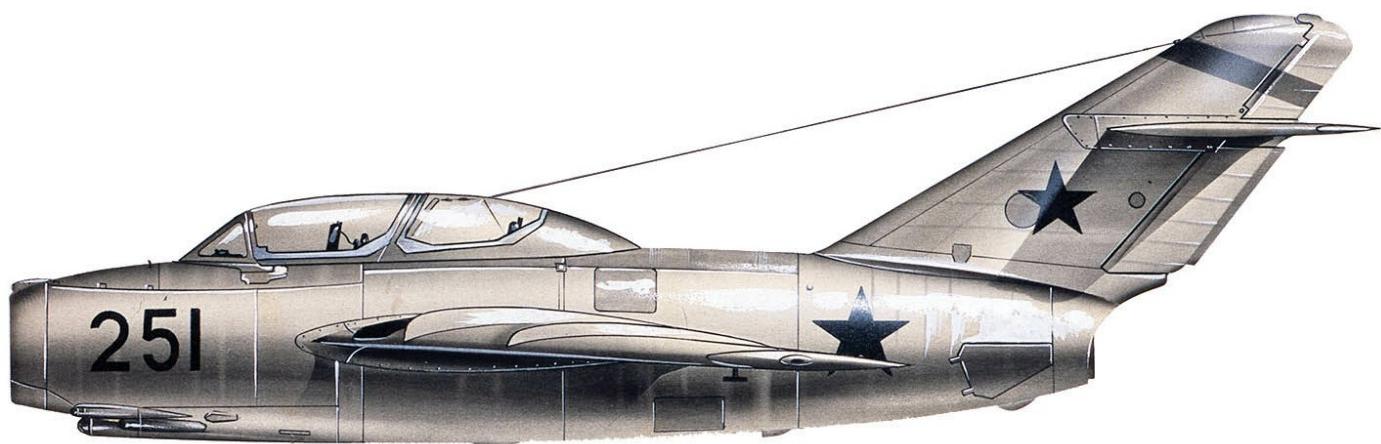
*Roy Gross:*

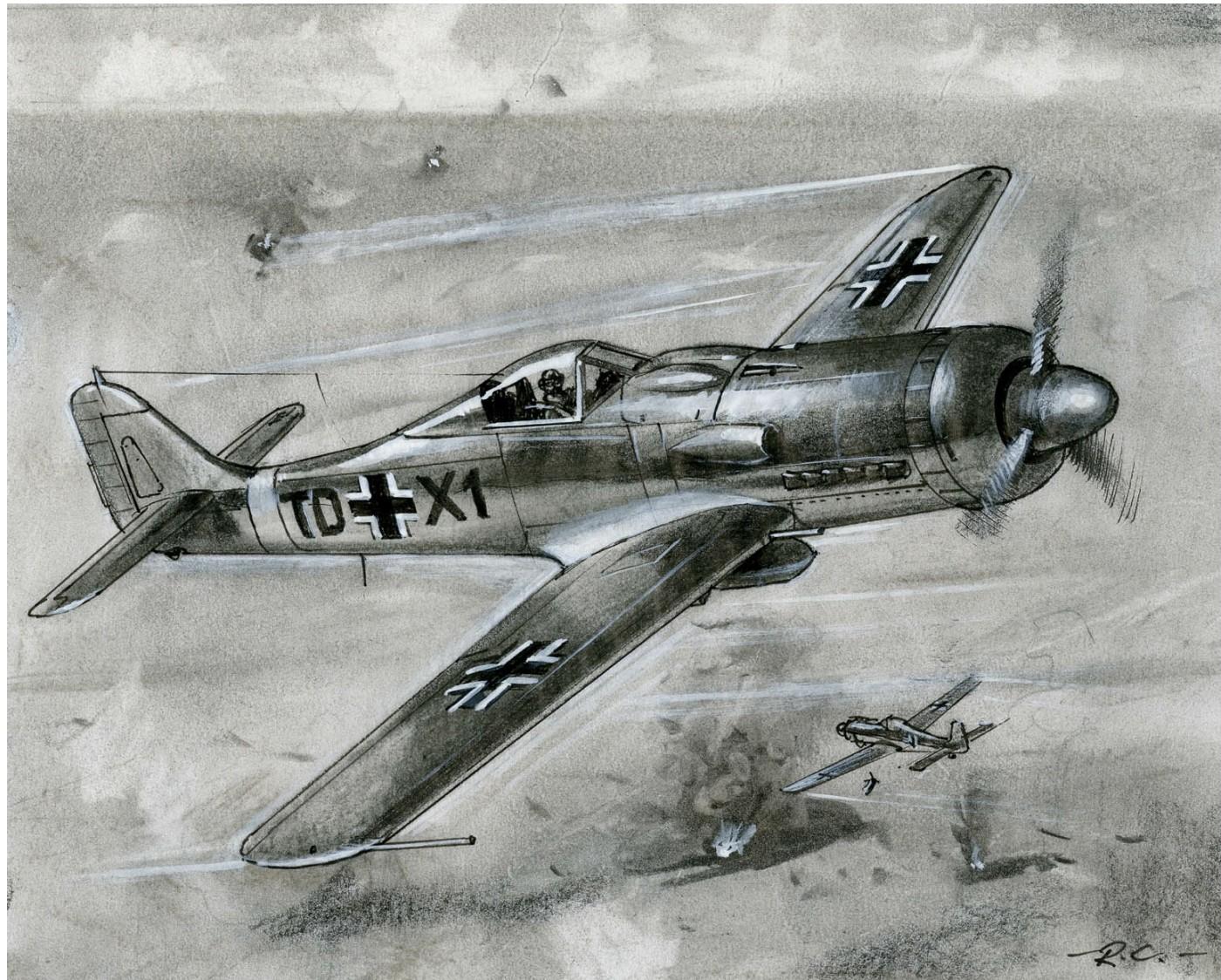


*The Red Arrows' Folland Gnat, for which it seems I did a number of versions (see also [Variations](#)).*



*The Russian MiG-15, supplied to many Iron Curtain countries as well as to China and, below, the two-seat trainer version.*

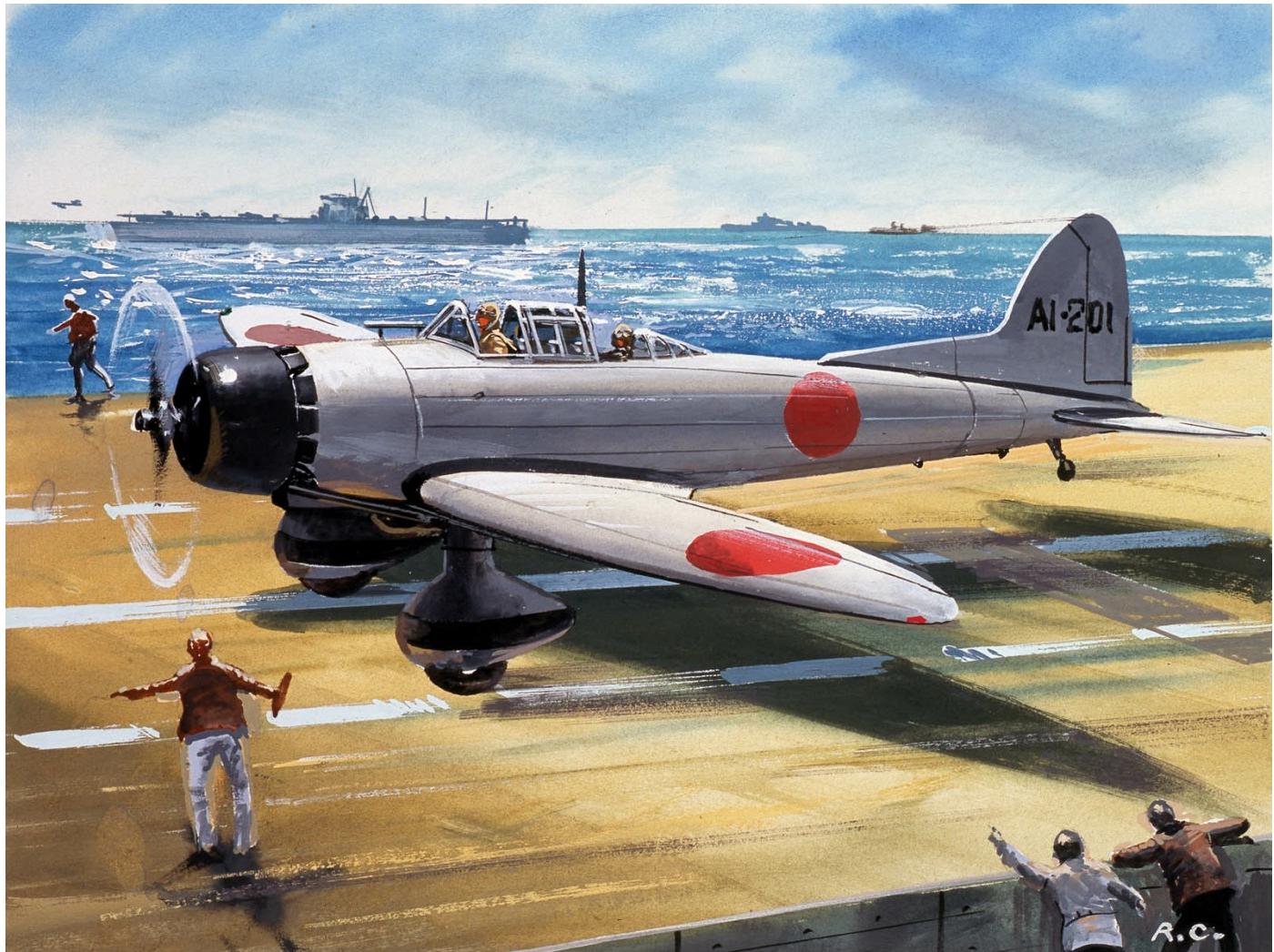




The original Fw 190D kit appeared in 1958 in its usual plastic bag and line/colour header. Why this 'long-nosed' D9 version was chosen rather than the original 'A' version contemporary with the Spitfire V is not known. My original finished picture appeared in The Vintage Years of Airfix Box Art but here is a submitted pencil alternative that was not accepted, perhaps because it was a little similar to the Bf 109G art also reproduced in Vintage Years. November 1964 must have been a particularly busy period for me, because I also invoiced for the Ju 87, Spitfire IX, Mustang and the dogfight double featuring the Roland C.II and the R.E.8 (illustrated in Vintage Years).



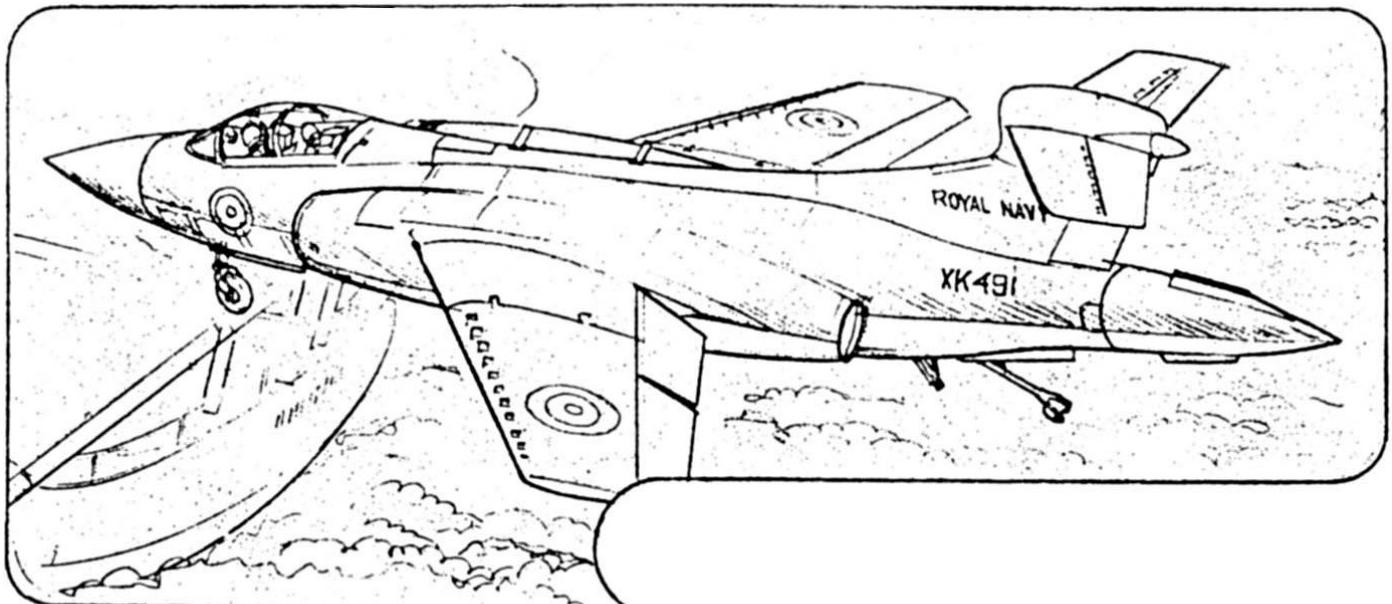
*The Hawker Typhoon kit first appeared in 1959, by which time as well as new kits I was redoing some of the old bagged kits in new boxed packaging. Here is the Typhoon 1B in invasion stripes, guns blazing, with a dark smoke background to bring out its light undersurface.*



*The Airfix Japanese Zero fighter had already been issued in 1959 and sales results seemed to have dictated producing another Japanese aeroplane to add to the popular World War Two series. The Aichi D3A1 dive bomber, code-named 'Val' by the Allies, was chosen and for some reason I did a considerable amount of preliminary work, obviously having the 1941 Pearl Harbor assault in mind, including this fairly finished study of the carrier take-off on that fateful morning. An alternative of a 'Val' dive-bombing an American warship was finally chosen.*



*Another new challenge for me was the American White half-track and trailer seen here on the precarious 700-mile Burma Road supply route to China from India.*



LANDING ON CARRIER - HOOK DOWN- SHOWS 'BULGES'

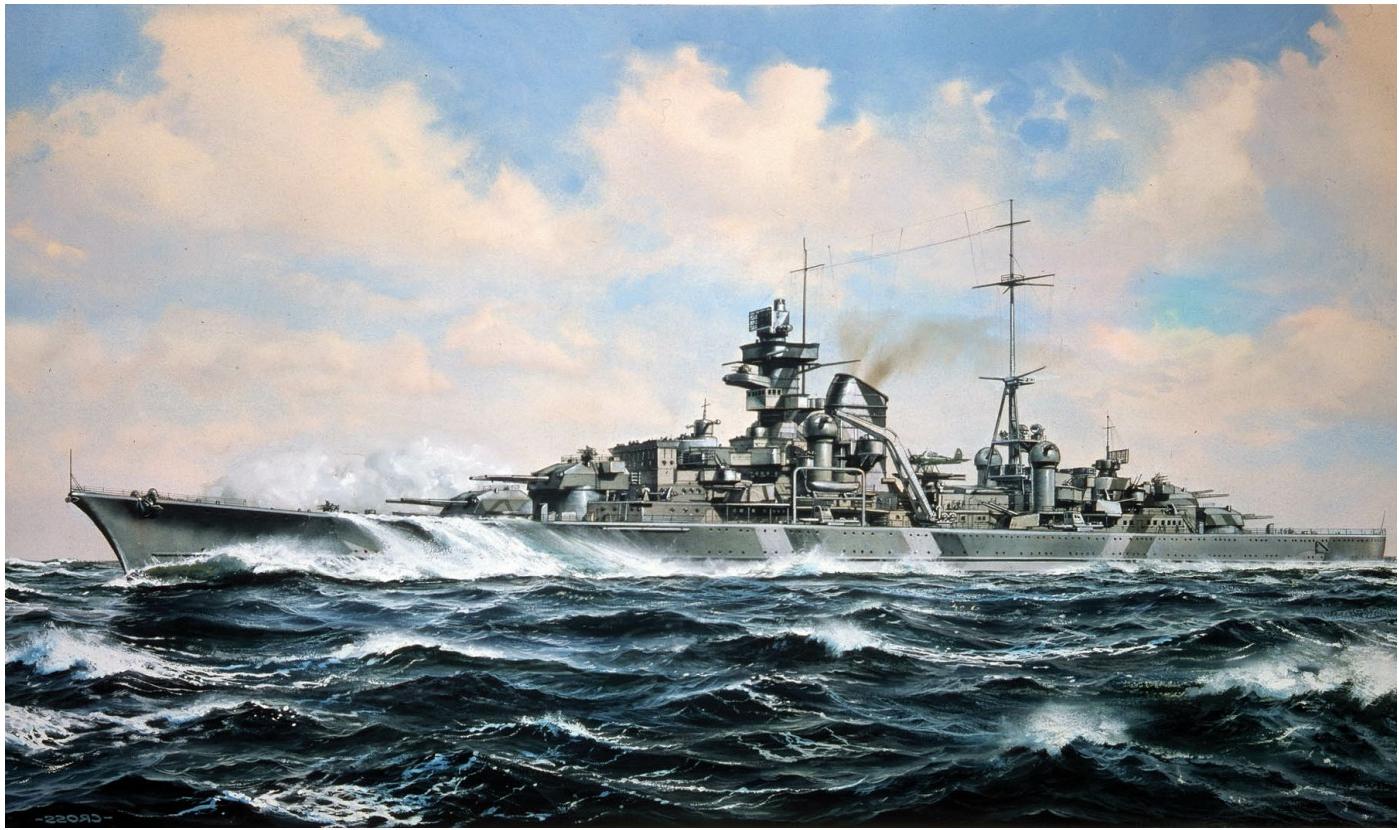
The final choice of box art below and, above, an unaccepted variation for the Blackburn Buccaneer. I did not always agree with the Airfix choice from my various 'roughs' but they were right here because, on reflection, cutting off the wingtip in the sketch (above) did rather 'freeze' the action.



- ROY CROSS -



*Heavy armament was a key to the unusual design of the Bell P-39 Airacobra, the highlight being a 37mm cannon mounted in the nose; this meant placing the Allison in-line engine behind the pilot, between whose legs was a 10ft extension shaft driving the propeller. Poor altitude performance from the engine made the P-39 inferior to the best European fighters but, playing to the design's strengths, it was well used by the Russians who received no fewer than 4,773 under 'Lend-Lease' arrangements from the USA, many stripped of armour and other essentials to boost the operational ceiling and general performance.*



*The German heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, one of a series of fighting ship models, several of which are illustrated in this book and still available today with my original artwork.*



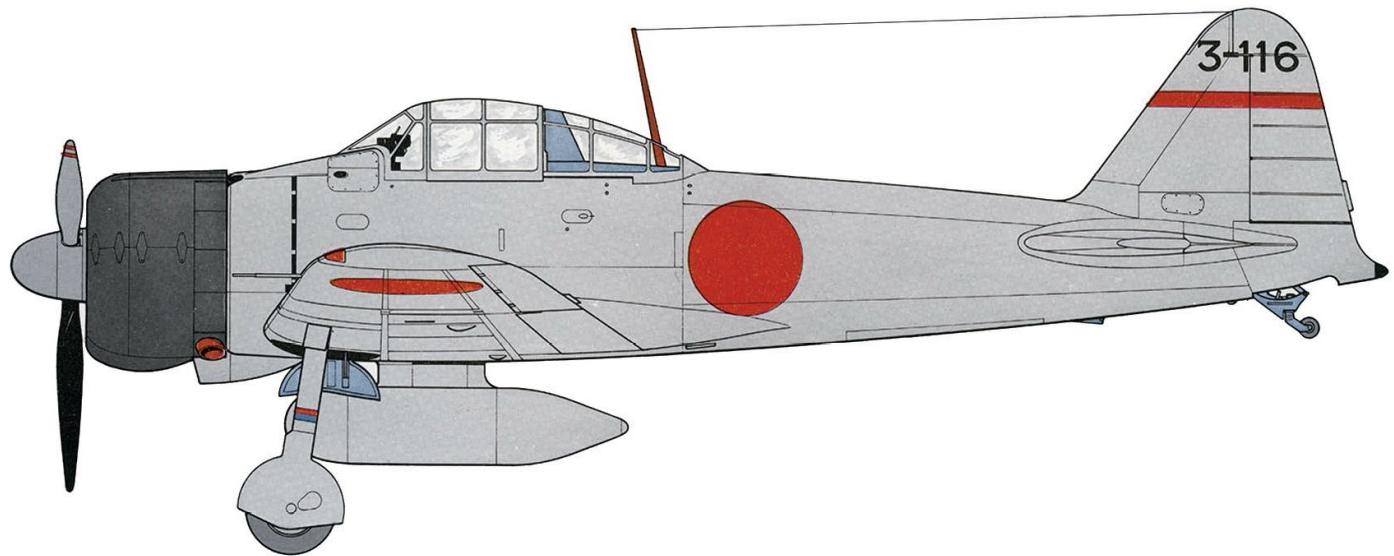
*The 'Narvik' class destroyer, which seemingly did not have a long life in the Airfix catalogue.*



*Second so-named in service with the Royal Navy, the 25,000-ton battleship Iron Duke was launched in 1912 as part of the vast rearmament of the fleet prior to World War One. She survived the war, but was eventually relegated to harbour duty until 1932. Famously, she served as the flagship of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe at the battle of Jutland in 1916.*



*Serving before and through World War Two, the Japanese Mitsubishi Navy Type 'O' (popularly known in the West as the 'Zero') sprang a nasty surprise on Allied aircraft in the Far East, despite prior warning from technical intelligence reports languishing in British and American files. Superior manoeuvrability and good performance up to medium heights, long range with early use of drop tanks, and the élan of Japanese pilots with eighteen months' war experience in China caused the downfall of many an Allied airman. Better fighters and new tactics finally counteracted the Zero's supremacy as a dogfighter. Below is a colour alternative that was not accepted by Airfix.*



*Side elevation of the Mitsubishi A6M2 Model 21 Zero.*



*It is said that the Russian IS.3 'Joseph Stalin' heavy tank could take on a German Tiger; though crudely built compared with German armour, it had excellent reliability and manoeuvrability. The IS.3 had thickened turret armour and a revised hull shape to ward off incoming projectiles and was introduced during the closing stages of the war, becoming the main heavy tank after 1945. The Airfix kit dates from 1963, but the above I did in 1965 to replace original packaging.*



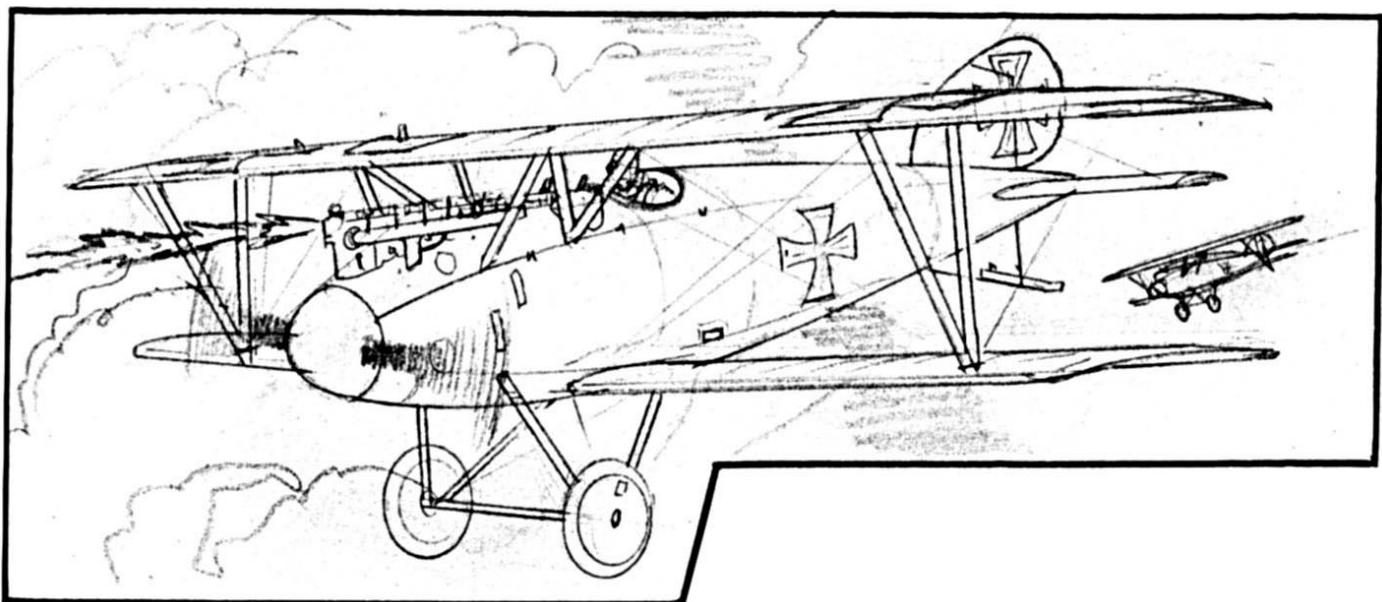
*The RAF Control Tower, one of a series of buildings I did including a gun emplacement set and a coastal defence assault set.*



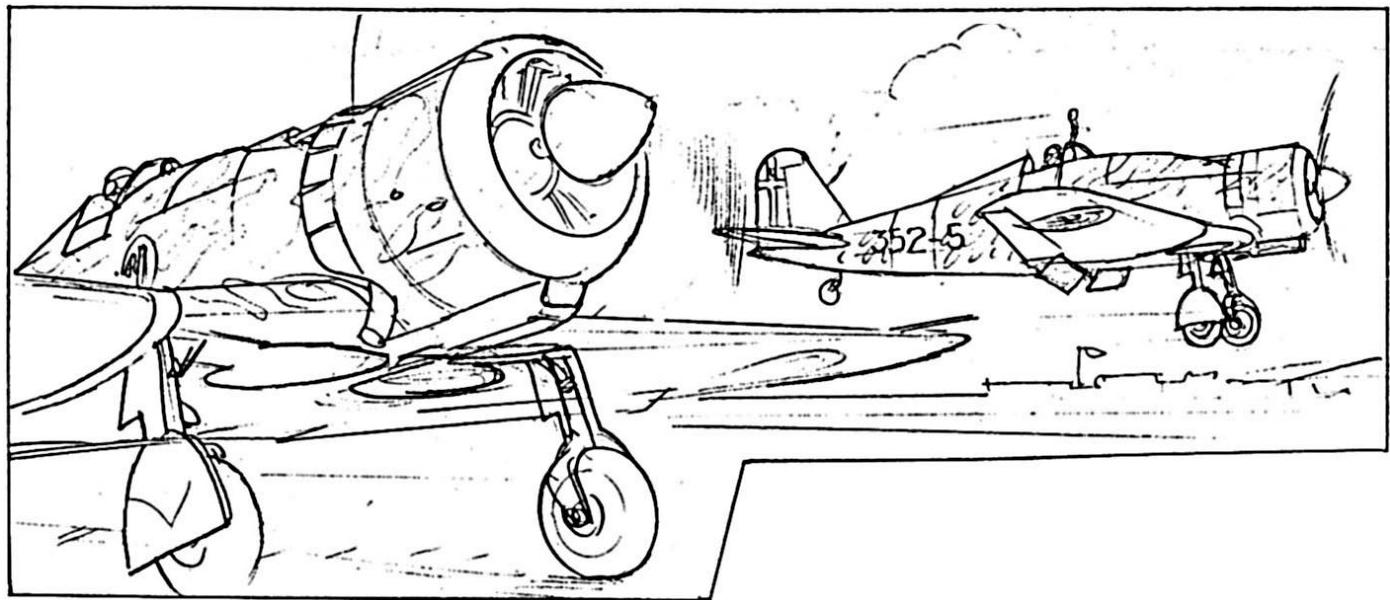
*Art for the 25-pounder field gun with Quad tractor unit, limber and crew. This was a fine gun, used throughout and after the war.*



*As the trench war persisted on the Western Front, the Germans were quick to introduce ground-attack aircraft, some of them even armoured such as the Hannover CL.III. The CL class also acted as two-seat fighters and escorts for the photographic and artillery spotting aeroplanes. A distinguishing feature was the biplane tail, an additional obstacle to the observer's field of fire!*



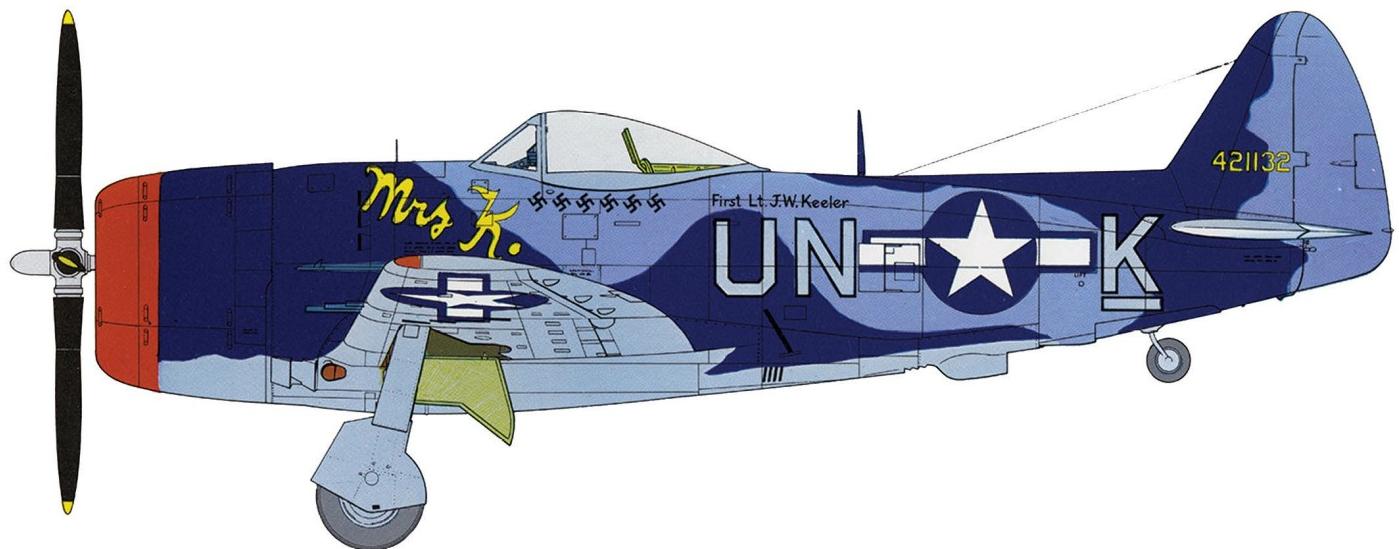
Introduced in 1916, the Albatros D.I and D.II fighters had the advantage of a synchronized two-gun armament and powerful Benz or Mercedes water-cooled engines, giving a useful performance and a consequent superiority over most Allied fighters. Airfix modelled the final developed variant, the D.Va, the original of which appeared in 1917 with a beautifully streamlined fuselage but a revised wing arrangement that led to some structural weakness. Directly above: An alternative submission was turned down by Airfix.



Italy was still using front-line biplane fighters when she entered the war in 1940, these belatedly to be replaced by modern monoplanes such as the Fiat G.50, which still had an open cockpit and at first only two 12.7mm guns as armament. Directly above is an alternative ground view that I thought would have made a packaging change, but possibly less exciting. However, Airfix always liked to have choice for the box cover.

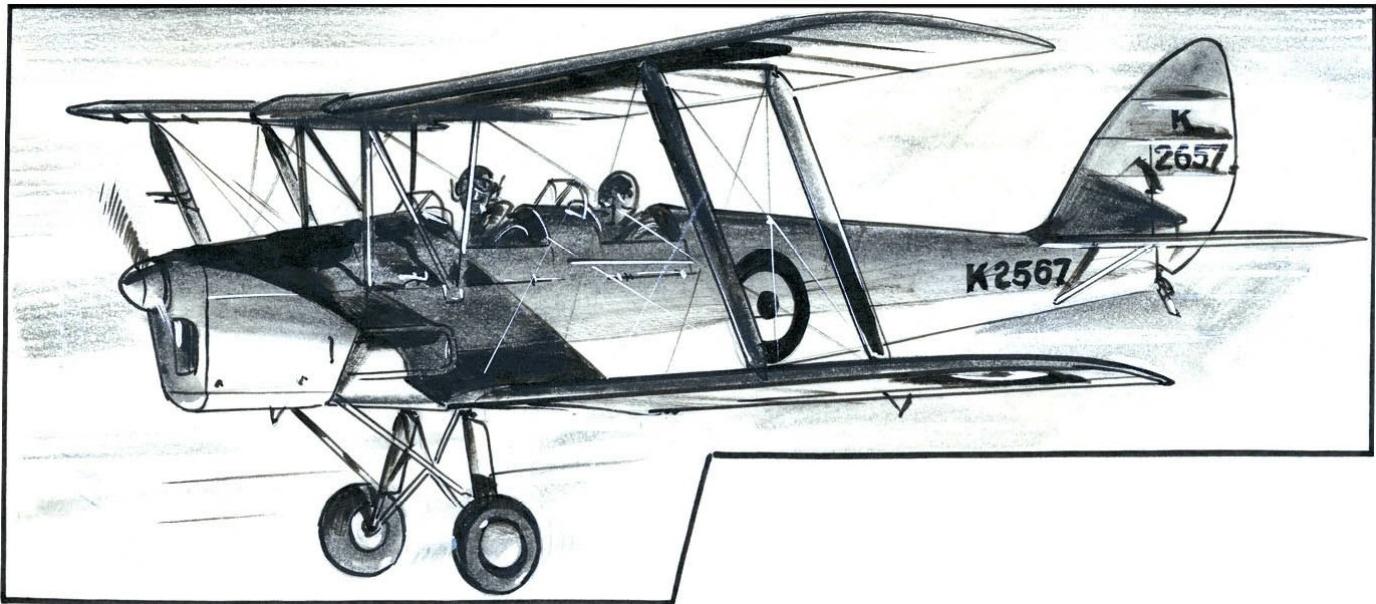


When the P-47 Thunderbolt first entered service in 1943 all were astonished by its huge size. Even its designer, Alexander Kartveli, exclaimed 'Nice 'plane but it is too big'. It served both as a turbo-supercharged high-altitude fighter and later as a rugged low-altitude tactical fighter. Armament was eight 0.5in wing guns with a hitting power of 773lb per minute. Below is a later P-47M version in service with the 63rd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group of the US Eighth Air Force, England 1945.

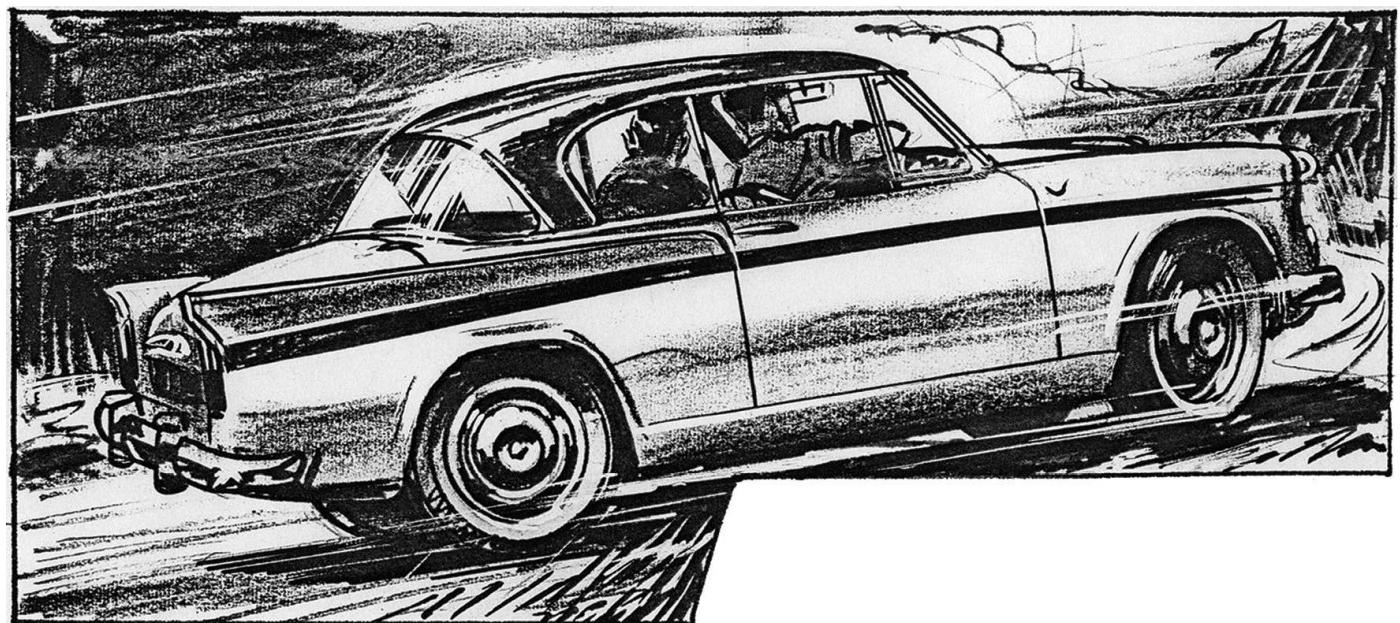


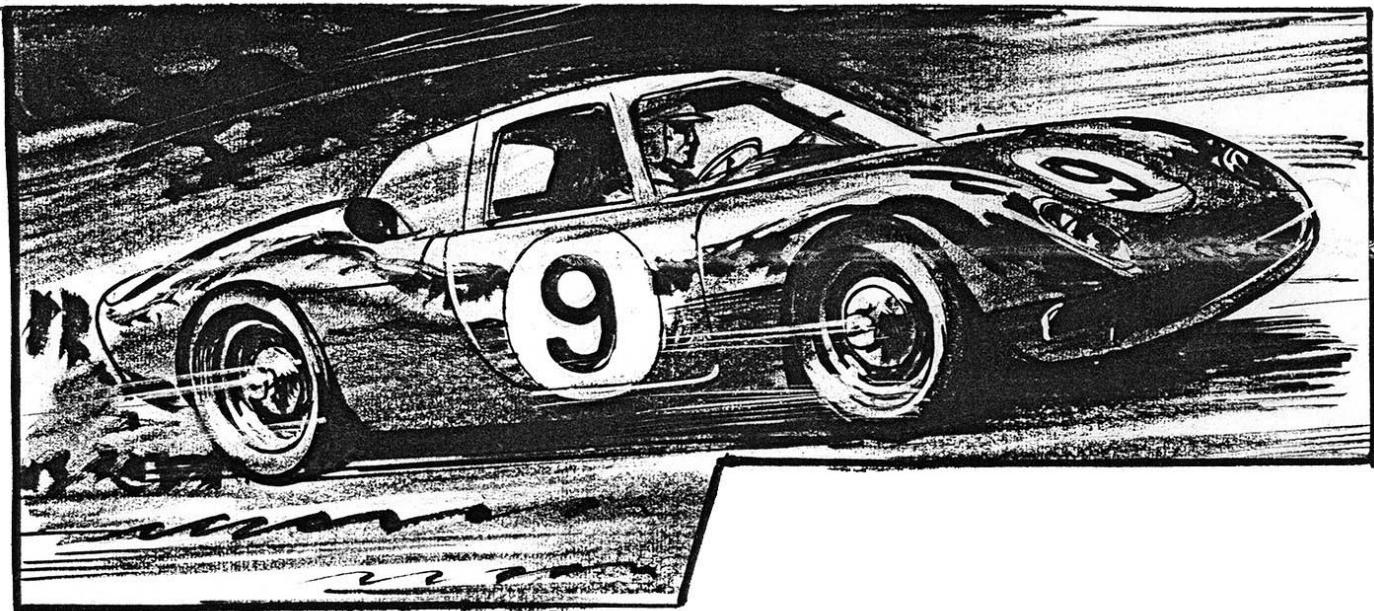


*The ubiquitous de Havilland Tiger Moth started life with the RAF as its ab initio trainer as early as 1934 and a total of around 7,290 had been made by the end of production; it was also manufactured in small numbers in Canada and New Zealand. Many are still in use in private and flying club hands. The ideal elementary trainer, it soldiered on in the RAF after the war until replaced by the de Havilland Chipmunk. The Airfix kit is still available in the current range. Below: In an effort to ring the changes this sketch was offered as alternative art, the idea being to show the aircraft inverted, but did not find favour.*



*The Short Skyvan was introduced early in the 1960s as a light multi-purpose transport for civil and military use, with short landing and take-off abilities. An amusing Short advertisement 'The Long and the Short of it' posed a Skyvan beside their big Belfast freighter. The Skyvan was indeed short but, as can be seen here, had a capacious fuselage.*

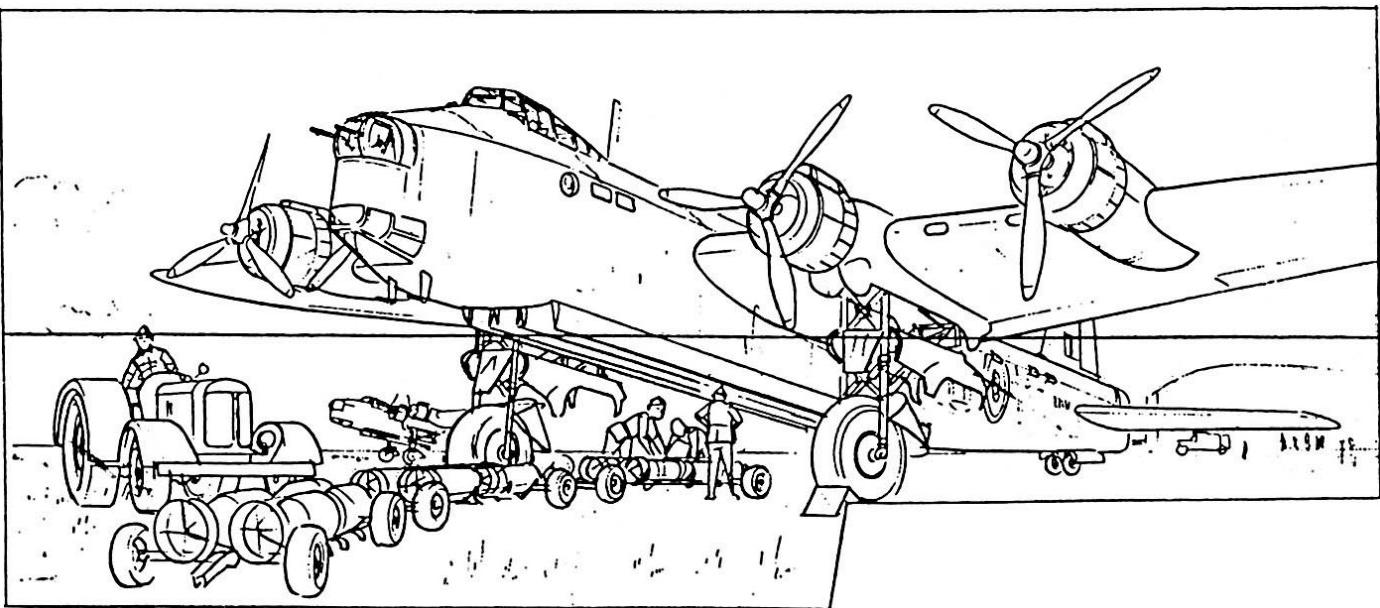
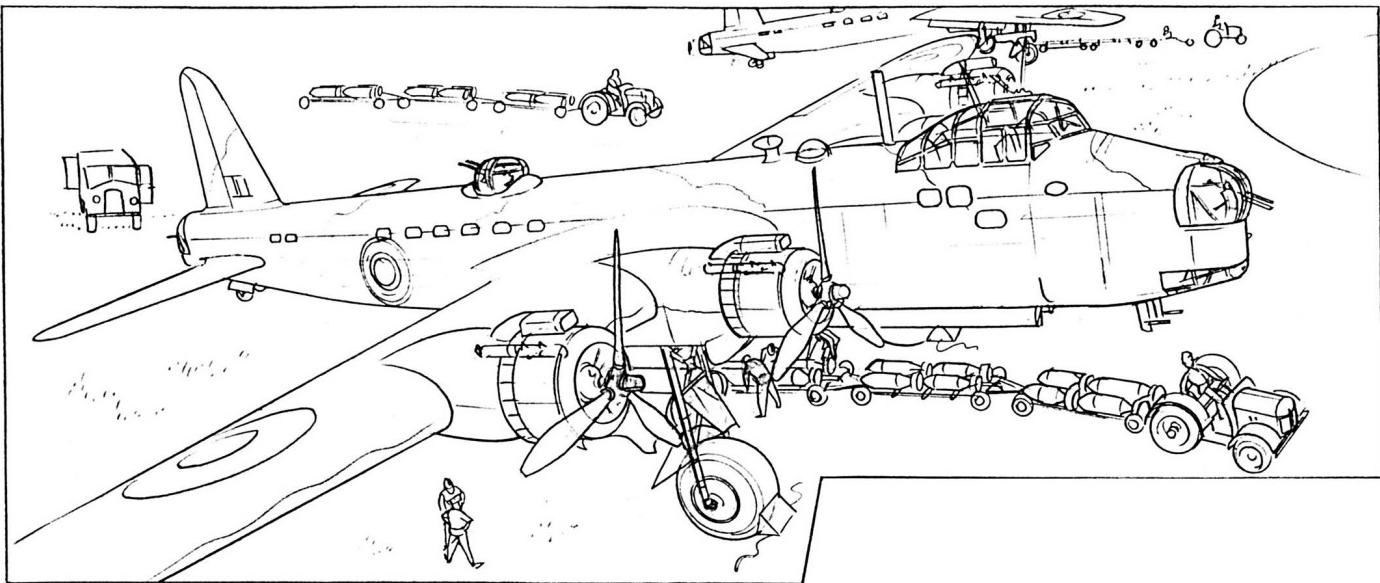




## FERRARI

Veteran cars were introduced at intervals in the Airfix car range, the 1902 De Dietrich (above, top) appearing in 1966 and the Morris Cowley two-seater (below) in the same year. Alternative ideas, as always, were offered and above (bottom) is the submission for the Ferrari 250LM issues in 1968, which was not accepted, while that for the 1961 Sunbeam Rapier model (above, middle) was.





The Airfix Short Stirling issued in 1966 was a big kit and warranted some thought on its presentation. My idea was to show not only the aircraft but also some of the ground paraphernalia: bombs, tractor, etc., a typical airfield scene in fact. On this occasion a ground view proved acceptable to the management and I worked hard at the two alternatives featured here. Above (top) is the idea that was not accepted, above (bottom) the final choice and, below, the final art, which compared with the 'rough' is slightly attenuated to show more detail of the bomb trolleys and the singular stalky undercarriage. The Stirling was the first into service of the RAF's four-engined 'heavies', which included the Handley Page Halifax and the Avro Lancaster.





*Ships were among the earliest Airfix model kits, starting with Sir Francis Drake's Golden Hind dating from 1952. The range contained both sail and more modern vessels, in both small and larger scales. Above is Columbus's Santa Maria of 1492, issued in kit form in 1954. No-one knows exactly what the ship looked like, except that she was three-masted, but the Airfix research team doubtless produced a reasonable replica of a typical carrack of the period and I added my bit in producing this painting.*



*The Great Western of 1838 was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel for the Great Western Steamship Company and was far larger than any steamship built up to that time. I did two versions, one (reproduced at the start of the book) for a small kit and this one for the bigger-scale box size.*



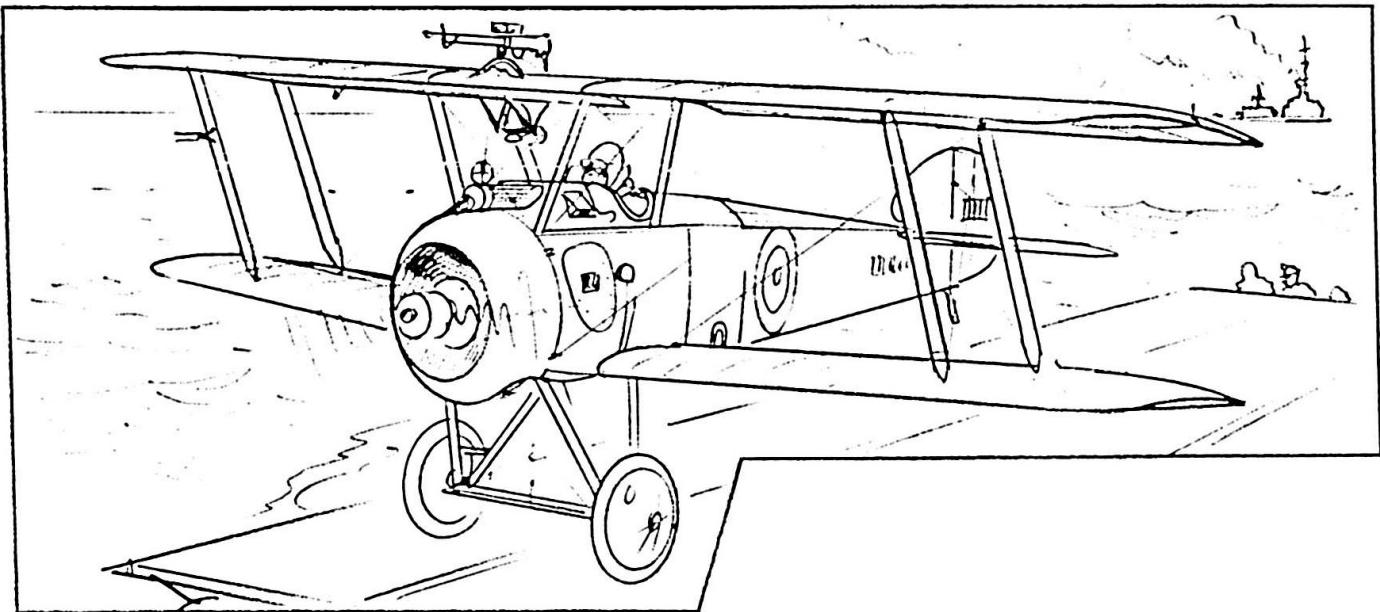
*The idea behind the Airfix 'Dogfight Double' series was presumably to present two related kits for not too much more than the price of one, the series starting in 1965 with three World War One sets. The Beaufighter plus Messerschmitt Bf 109G-6 art appeared in 1966, with the Beaufighter hastily dropping its torpedo while under attack. The Messerschmitt has underwing WGr.21 rocket tubes; the Bf 109G series was powered by the new Daimler-Benz DB605 with increasing use of power boost to improve speed and height performance. Its roles included chasing high-flying RAF Mosquitos, which, however, they seldom could catch.*



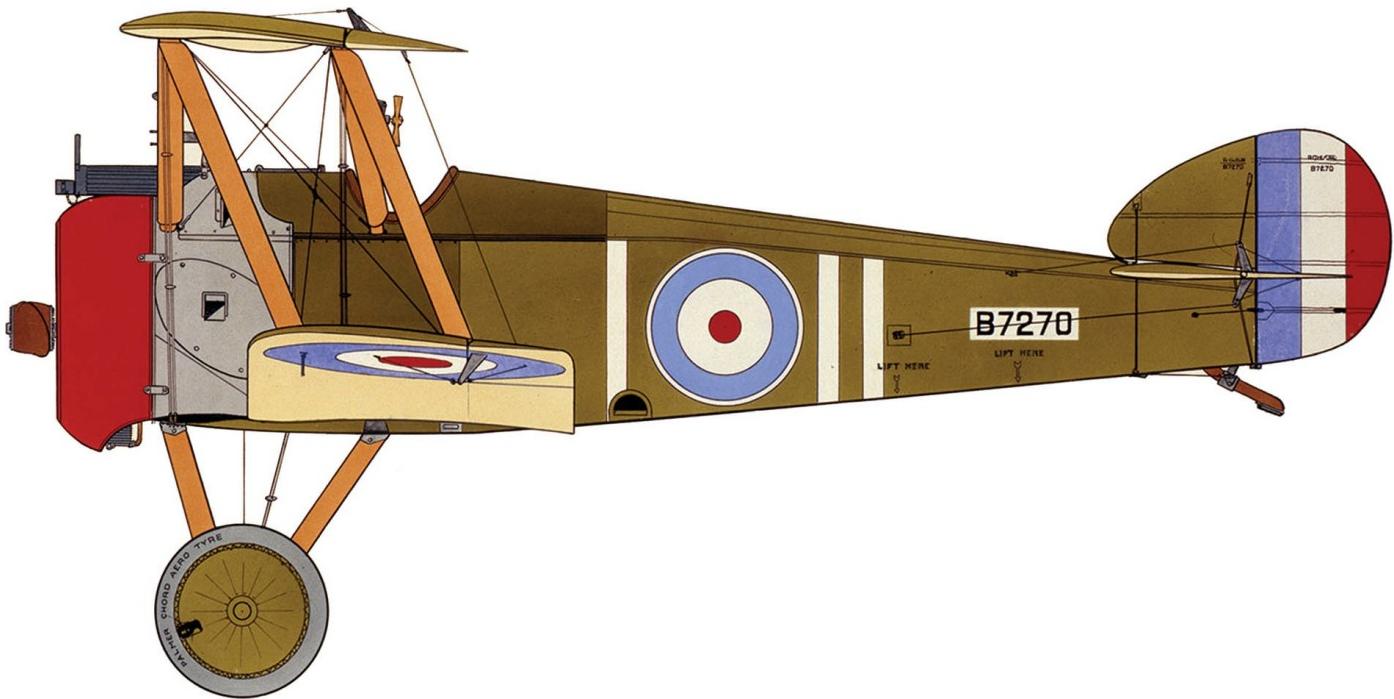
*Issued in 1958, the Douglas A4D-1 Skyhawk kit was one of a series of American aircraft kits for which I produced the box art, also including the Vought-Sikorsky Kingfisher, the Douglas AD-1 Skyraider and the Sikorsky SH-3D search and rescue helicopter. A lightweight single-seat attack bomber, the Skyhawk shown is in US Navy guise; it also served with many other air forces and naval air arms including those of Australia, Israel and Argentina, as well as with the US Marine Corps.*



*The Sopwith F.1 Camel is said to have destroyed more enemy aircraft in World War One than any other British fighter and was famed for its agile but rather quirky handling. It was said to be able to make three turns to the rival German Albatros' two. The Camel joined its companion RFC fighter, the S.E.5, at the front in July 1917. The S.E.5 was faster, more stable and known for its strength in the dive, but less feisty. Several night-fighter units flew the Camel for Home Defence. Most of the 5,490 Camels built had the lightweight 130hp Clerget rotary engine – later versions had the 150hp B.R.I for improved performance. The Camel shown above is a night-fighting version with a moveable Lewis gun mounted on the top wing.*

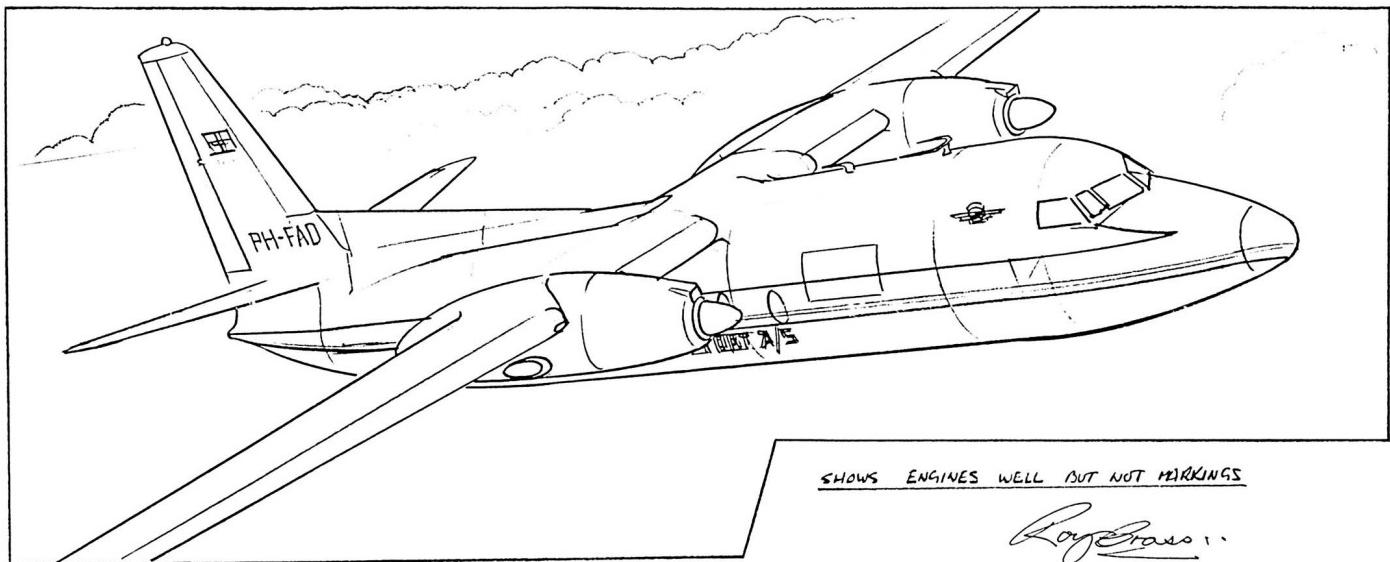


Above is an alternative idea for the 2F.1 Camel for naval use taking off from a lighter towed behind a destroyer, submitted but not accepted. The side elevation, below, is of a B.R. 1-engined machine flown by Canadian ace Captain A.R. Brown, who at the time was credited with shooting down Germany's ace of aces, Baron Manfred von Richthofen on 21 April 1918. Later research, though, has suggested that ground fire might have been the cause.





Airfix obviously had an eye to the Continental and American markets as well as at home, which may have been the reason for the choice of the Fokker F.27 Friendship. The kit subject was usually selected by the drawing office research staff and offered to management for the final choice with regard to size of a potential market. The Friendship was a turboprop short-to-medium range airliner, usually with thirty-two seats; the high-wing layout was an unusual feature, which nevertheless gave passengers a fine view downwards. The undercarriage, housed in the under-wing engine nacelles, had to be quite long, and the fuselage underside seemed a little close to the ground when the Friendship was stationary. Well over 500 Friendships were ordered by a large variety of carriers including Mohawk and Northeast in the USA, Quebecair, Pacific, Air France, East African, Korean and Pakistan International.



SHOWS ENGINES WELL BUT NOT MARKINGS

*Roy Cross*.

*A more conventional view, which, however cut the wing off and did not find favour with the management.*



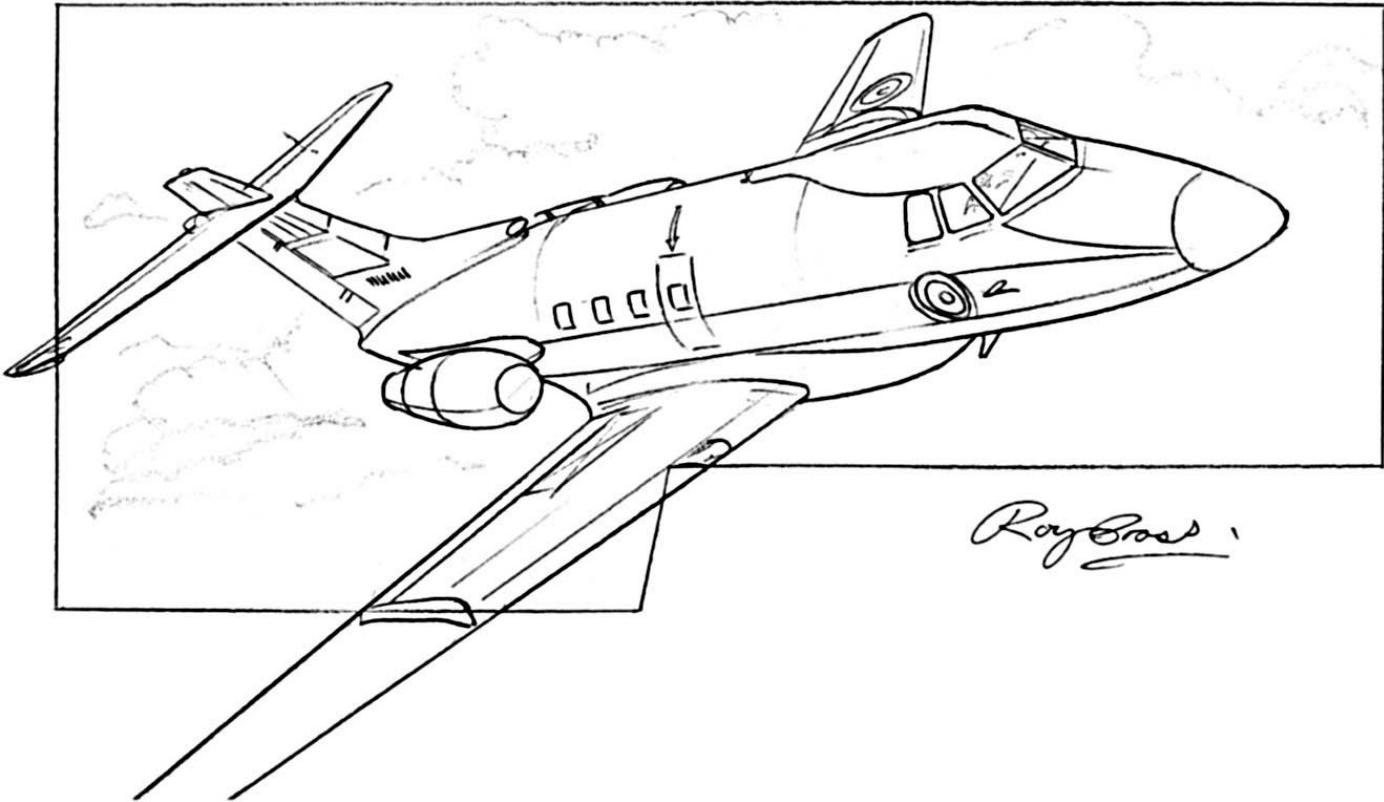
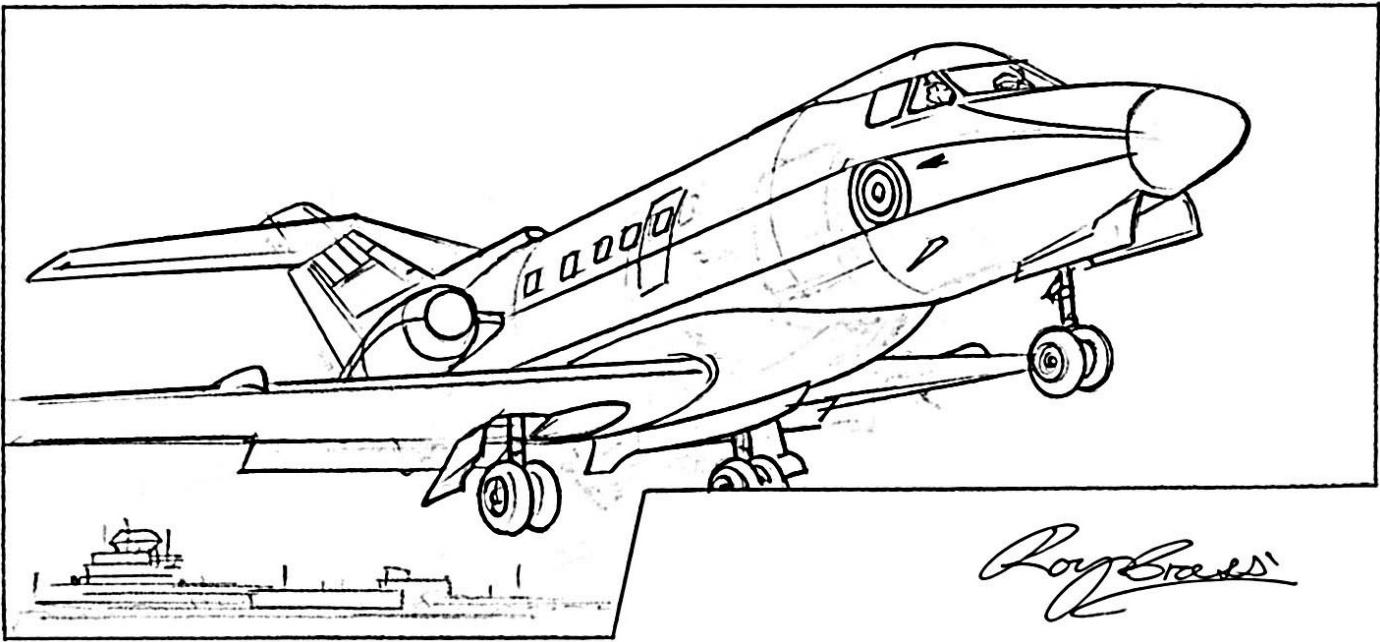
*Side elevation of the de Havilland Comet 3 jet airliner.*



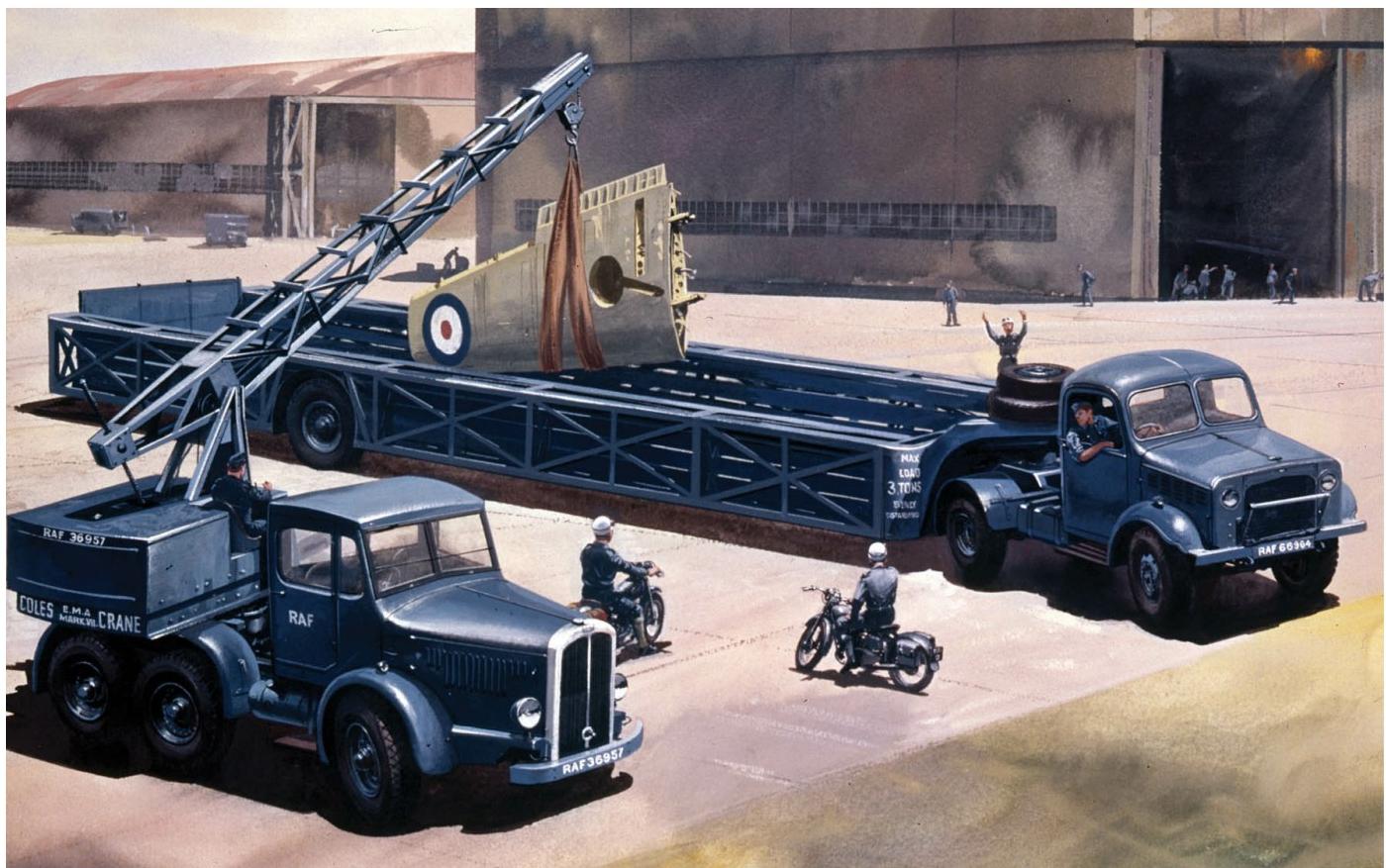
*Northrop's F-5 'Freedom Fighter', for which I did the art in 1965 together with the Harvard trainer and the F-4B Phantom twin-engined attack fighter. The F-5 was a comparatively low-cost lightweight supersonic tactical fighter intended for export to allied governments as well as the American air forces. Its top speed from the two General Electric turbojets was around Mach 1.4 at high altitude. It was used by Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Vietnam, Spain, Turkey, South Korea and many other friendly nations.*



*Porsche's Carrera 6 Group 4 GT racer. It competed in the 1966 Daytona 24-hour race, finishing sixth and winning its class.*



For some reason I cannot recall I spent more time on alternative ideas for some subjects than others and such a case was the Hawker Siddeley 125. Two ideas that were turned down are reproduced above; the finished art box cover art is below. The 125 was a jet-powered replacement for the very successful DH.104 Dove light passenger transport. The Airfix kit appeared in 1968 as the RAF's Dominie T.1 version.



*The RAF Recovery Set that I did a few years later, to go with the RAF Control Tower (see earlier in this [chapter](#)) and the Refuelling Set for an airfield diorama.*



*When modelling the Royal Navy's assault ship HMS Fearless, Airfix went to town with opening stern doors and miniature tank landing craft, but not the helicopter as featured on the box art! The staggered twin funnels indicated that the engines and boilers were arranged in echelon. The ship was fitted out as a self-contained Naval Assault Group/Brigade headquarters to fully control an assault operation. Fearless could carry 400 (or, as an overload for a short period, 700) Marines.*



*The classic Ford 3-litre GT racer, the kit of which was issued in 1969.*



*The Scorpion tank was the last I did of a series of military vehicles, which included the US Sheridan, the World War One tank, the Leopard, the Panzer IV, the Russian T-34, the Crusader, the Matilda and the Japanese Chi-Ha, all of which were reproduced in The Vintage Years of Airfix Box Art. Below is the Scammell A201 V tank transporter, to the same scale as the Airfix tanks and so able to accommodate all of them.*





*The Bristol Type 142 civilian passenger aeroplane of 1935 achieved a top speed of 285mph on official trials, considerably better than the 225mph of the Gloster Gauntlet single-seat fighter just going into service with the RAF. Such were the seeds of the Blenheim bomber, shown here in its Mk IV form with a longer nose and extra tankage, in action over North Africa. A Blenheim IVL of No. 139 Squadron made the first operational RAF mission of World War Two on 3 September 1939 for a 4 hour 49 minute flight to Kiel and back to photograph the German fleet.*



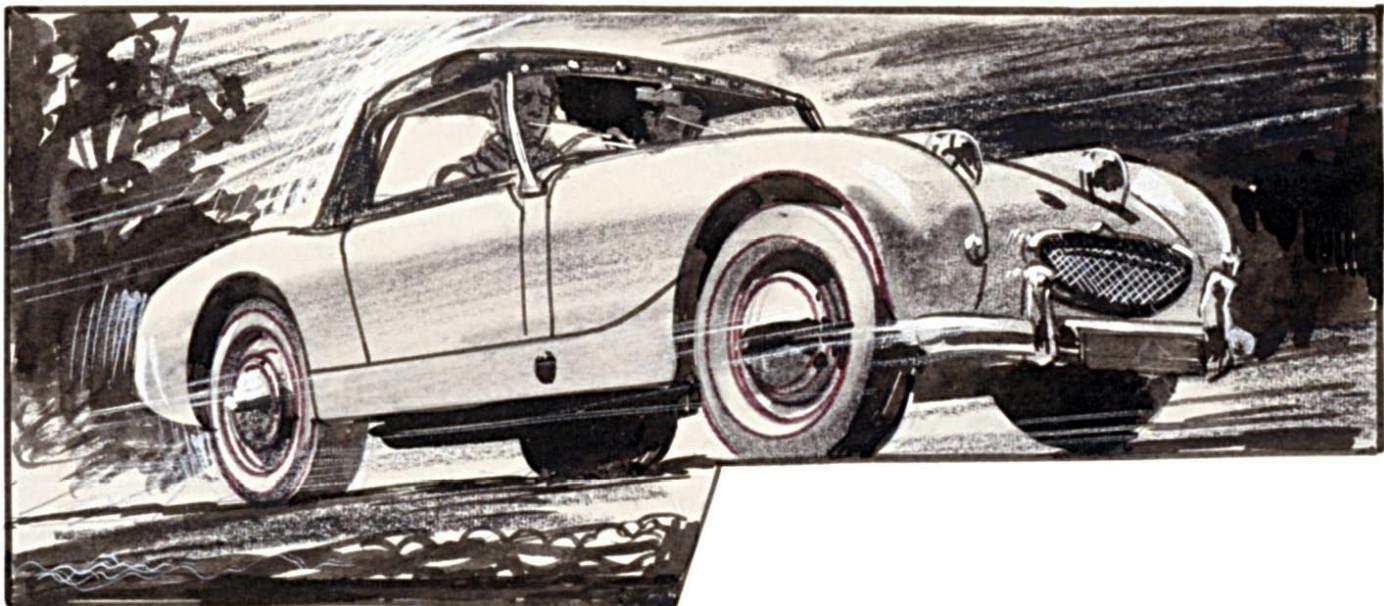
*Shown with the same North African theme, the Fieseler Fi 156 Storch, a light army cooperation and liaison aircraft with notably short take-off and landing capability and slow flying performance, afforded by extensive leading edge slots and full-span flaps. Rommel used one in the Western Desert. The long, stalky undercarriage gave a soft landing at minimal speeds, especially in a light headwind.*

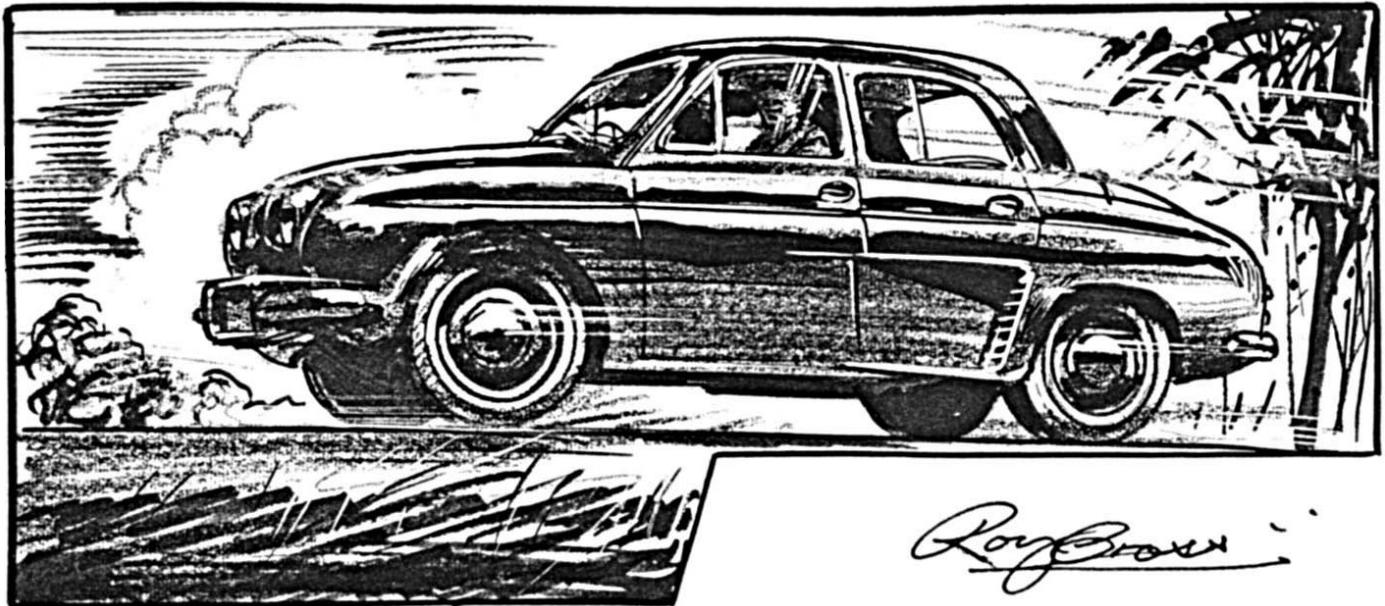


*Here are some of the extensive Airfix car range; above the 1933 Alfa Romeo, which had a remarkable series of victories at Le Mans in the early 1930s.*



*The sporting Austin-Healey Sprite (an alternative is shown below). Its sister, the MG Midget, continued in production well after the Sprite.*





*Roy Brown*

*A charcoal visualization for the Renault Dauphine.*



*The mighty Tirpitz under attack from Fairey Barracuda aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm.*



*A venture into space for Airfix, the model Saturn IB rocket featured removable stages and a detailed command capsule with rocket.*



*The Lunar Module kit came complete with astronauts and the American flag.*



*Above, the pioneering 180-ton Mayflower, which set out from Plymouth in September 1620 to carry a band of pilgrims to America for a new life from what they felt was religious persecution.*

*The pictures above and below sowed the seeds of a future career after Airfix as an historical marine artist.*



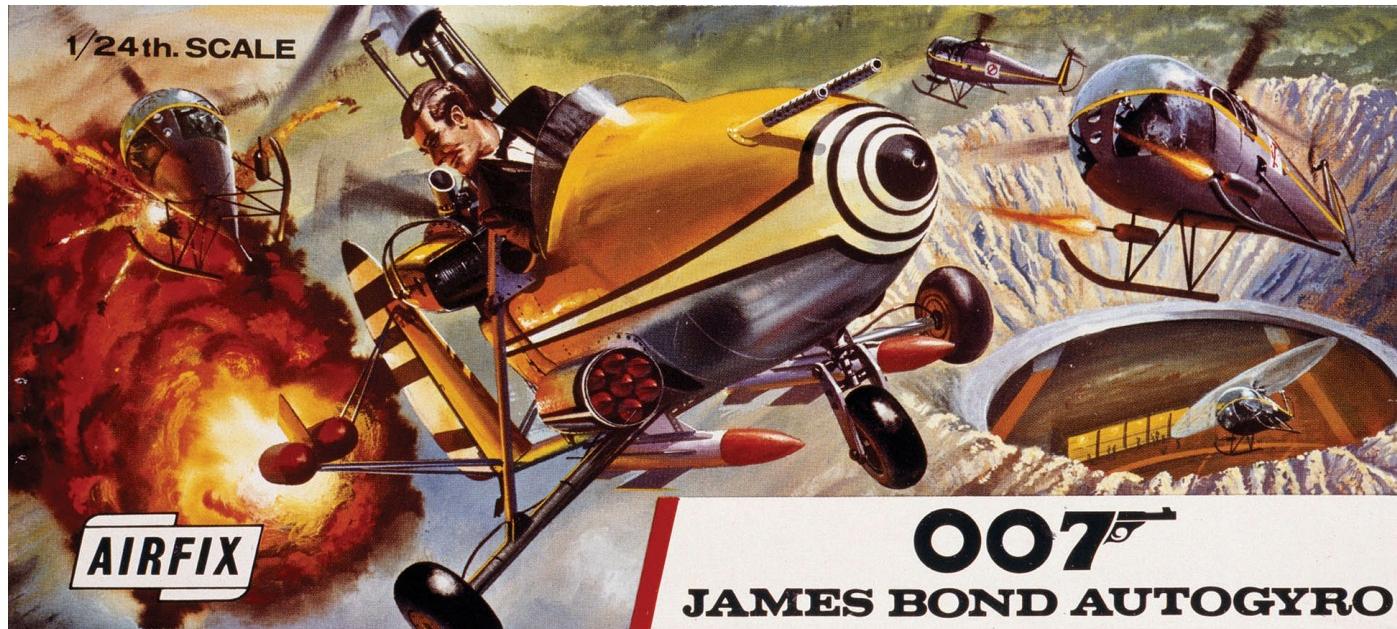
*Another of Airfix's famous ship series that could hardly be omitted – Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar, HMS Victory, which happily survives today in her full glory at Portsmouth dockyard.*



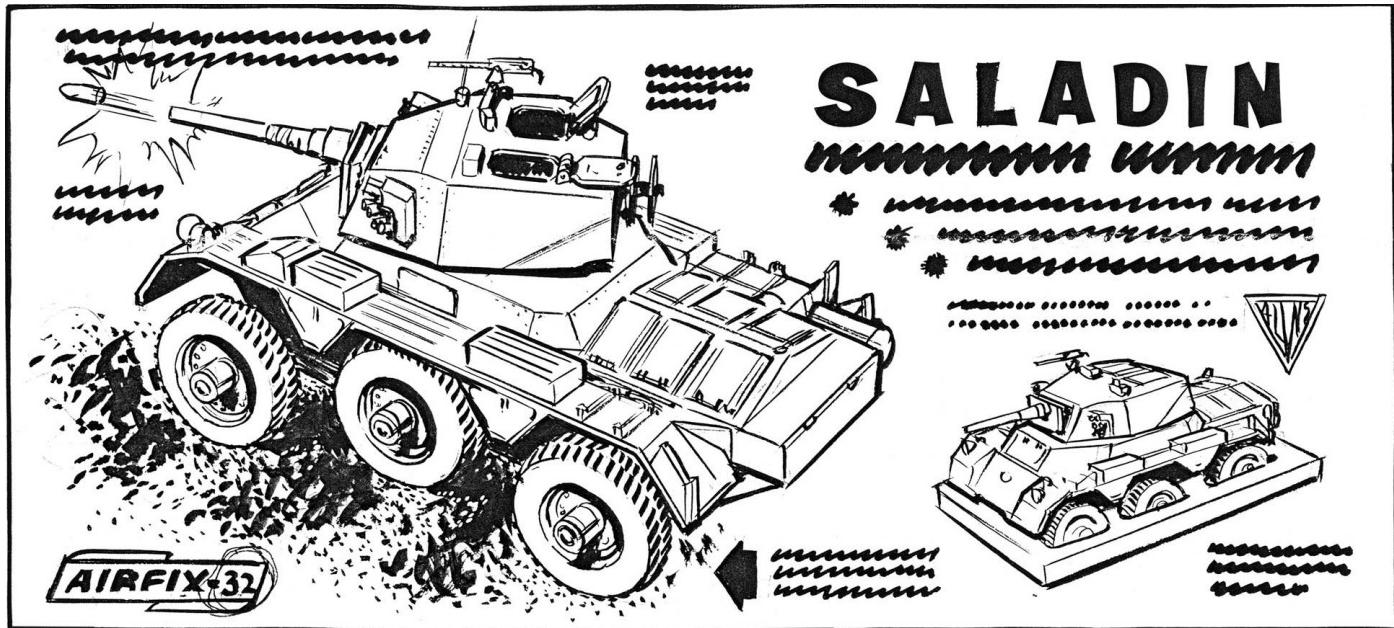
*After a series of shattering defeats of British frigates by powerful American vessels in the war of 1812, the 38-gun HMS Shannon, commanded by Captain Philip Broke, captured the USS Chesapeake within sight of the port of Boston, a great boost to the Royal Navy's morale.*



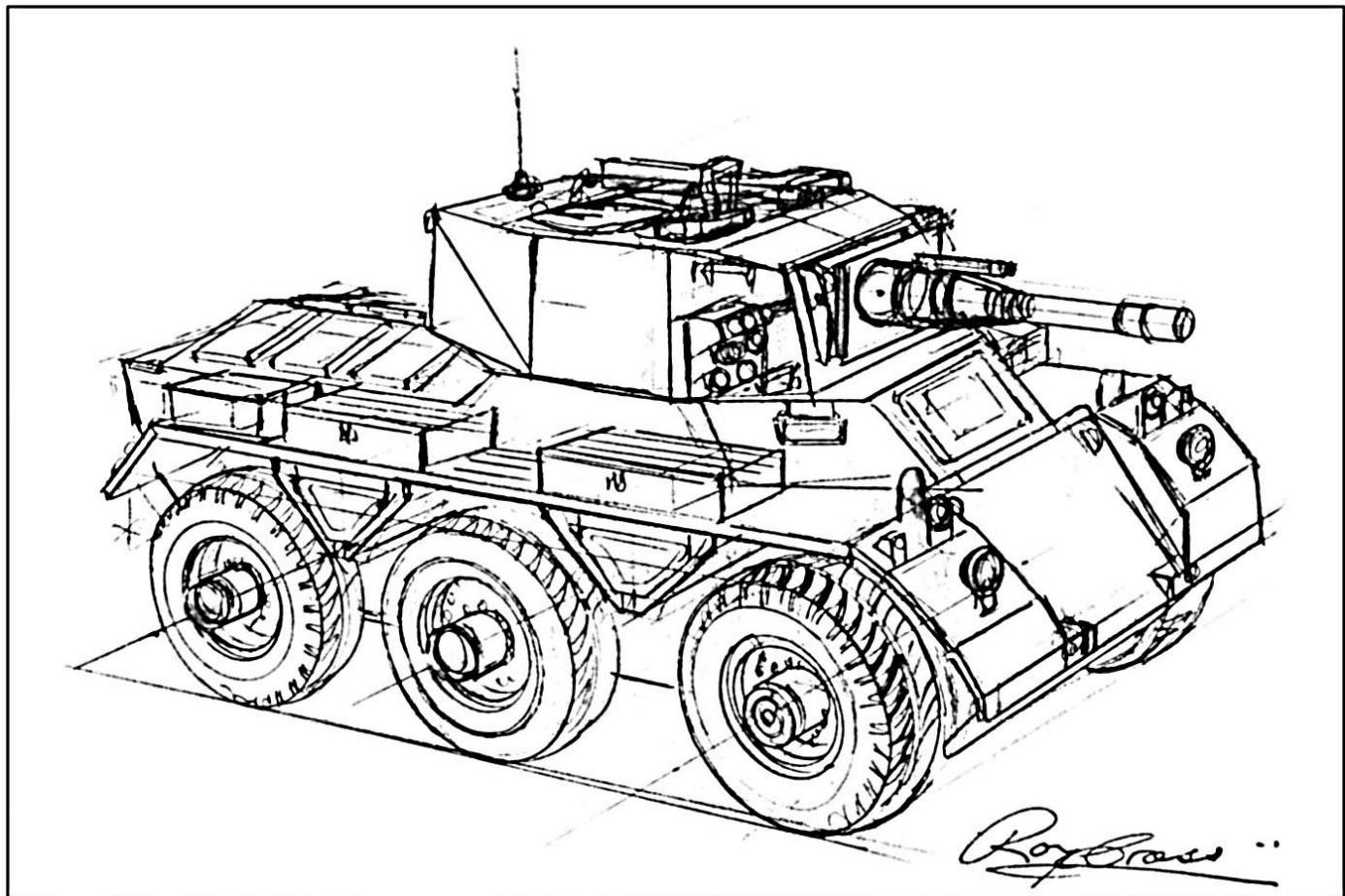
*Airfix designers and management were always on the lookout for newsworthy and topical subjects, and therefore for the possibilities of franchise agreements such as those with 'Captain Scarlet' and, as here, the James Bond movies. This applied to their toys and games as well as the usual lines of plastic construction kits. Artwork for 'James Bond and Oddjob' (from the movie Goldfinger) above was completed in 1966; below the Toyota 2000GT that featured in You Only Live Twice in 1969.*

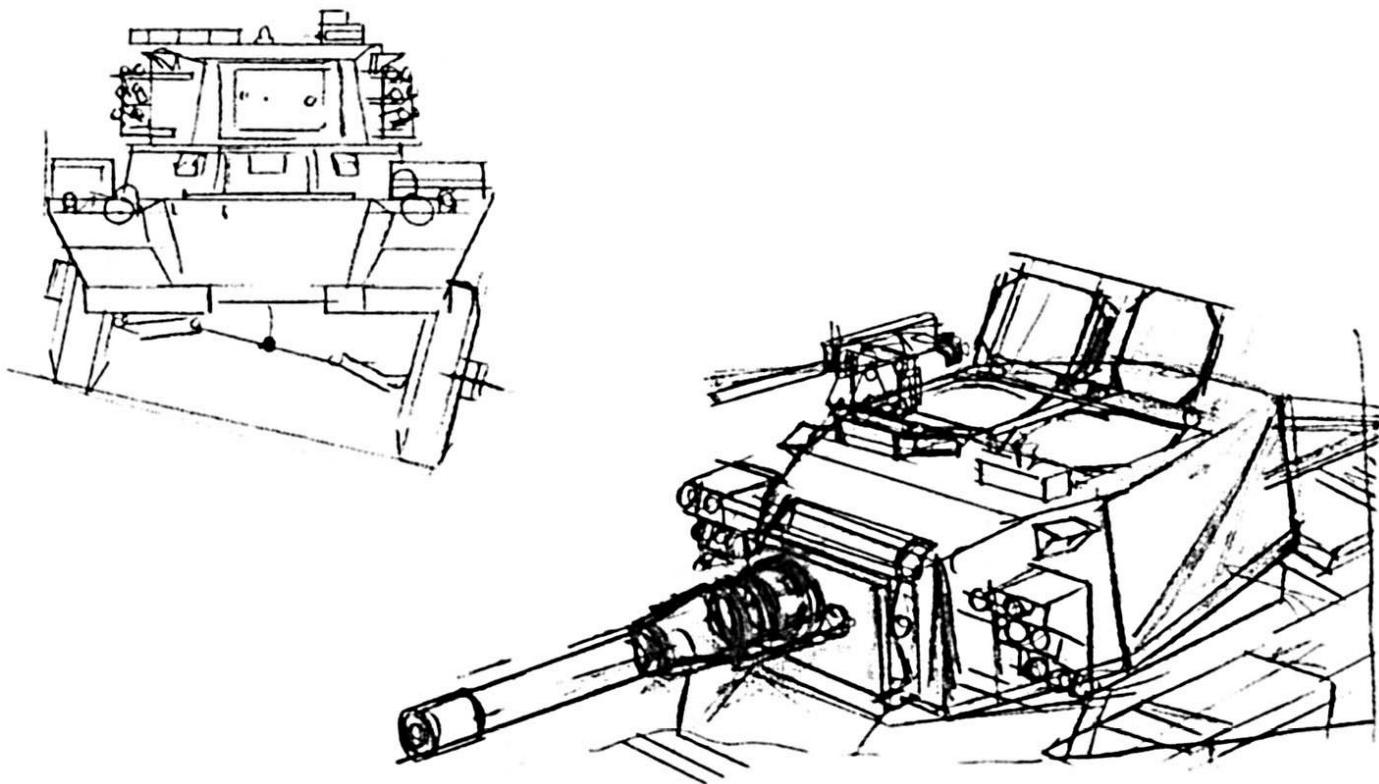


*Art for the autogyro from You Only Live Twice; as no transparencies for these items survive, original box tops are reproduced here. I felt they should be included as one more facet of the ever-expanding scope of Airfix products.*



*A series of sketches and promotional material for the Saladin armoured car done in 1968. I also did the finished art plus side panels, but have not been able to trace these so far in the Airfix files.*







*A feature of the 51-ton Chieftain tank built by Leyland Motors Ltd was the giant 120mm high-velocity cannon. The contra-rotating turret gave the commander all-round vision independent of the gun's traverse. The gun itself, made by GEC Electronics, was stabilized to hold onto any moving target. The engine was a 700hp two-stroke multi-fuel compression-ignition unit, also made by Leyland. The supine position of the driver enabled the height of the vehicle to be lowered by some 12–18in (300–450mm), a lower profile being of vital advantage on the battlefield.*



*The 'Angel Interceptor' inspired by the television series 'Captain Scarlet' with its glamorous all-female pilots were popular models in their day.*



*The Apollo Saturn V Airfix rocket model was 30in (750mm) high. Again, each section could be separated and a detailed lunar module and space capsule were featured.*

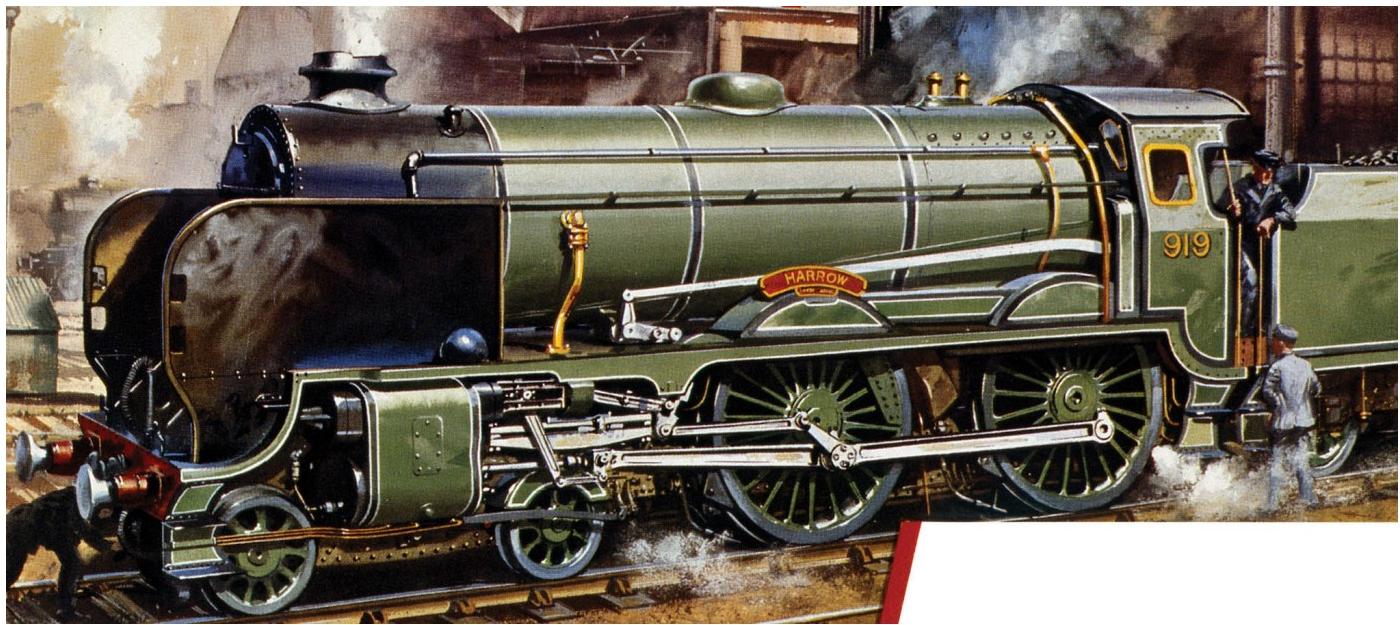


*An Airfix rarity was the 'Junior Pilot' flight simulator toy ('Fly the BOAC VC 10'), which promised realistic battery-powered jet noise, an authentic control column, flight manual with routes and flying times and even a pilot's hat. My artwork, but I never saw the finished item.*

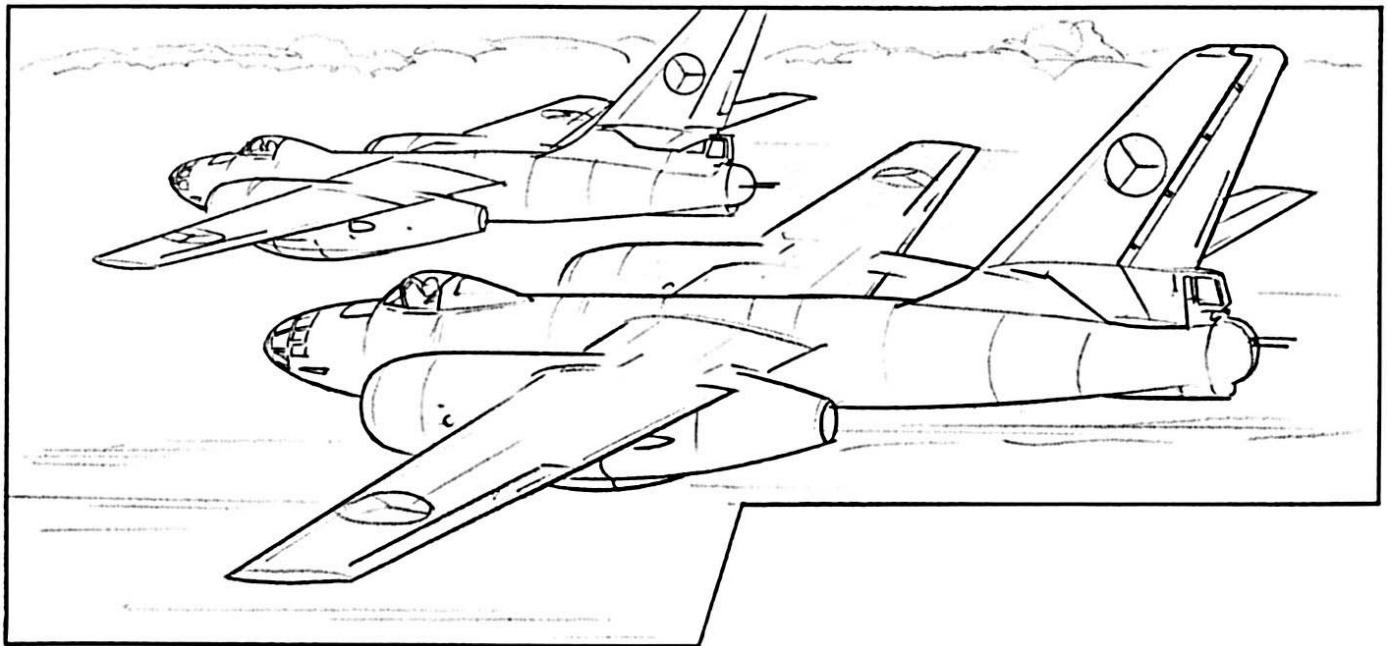
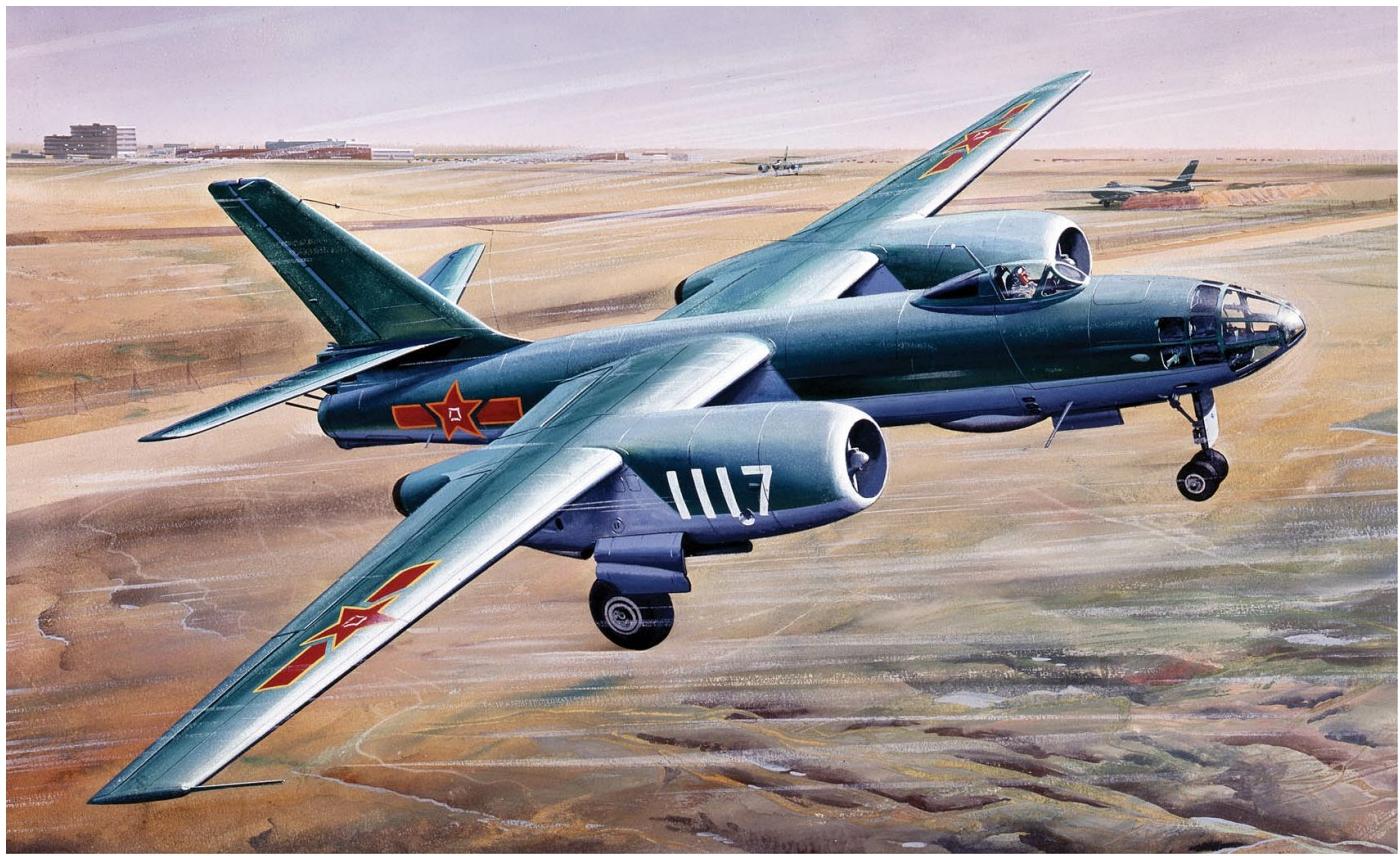


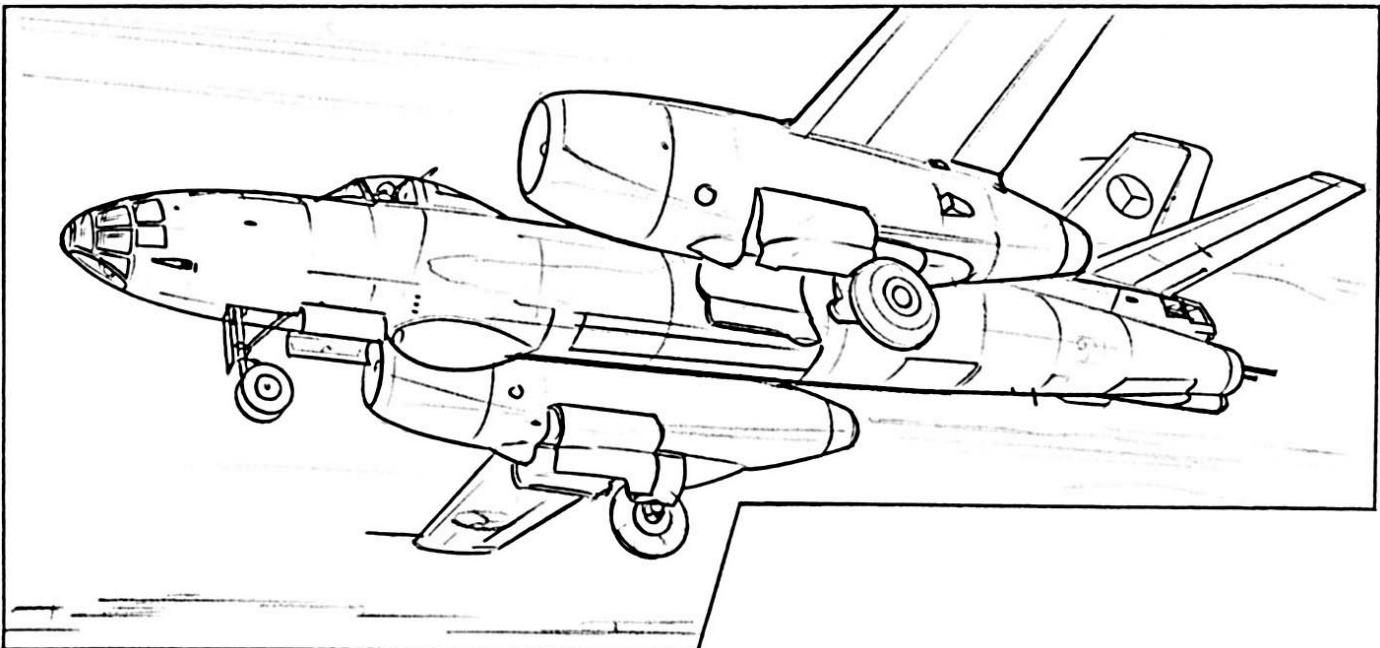


*Southern Railway's famous 'Battle of Britain'-class locomotive 'Biggin Hill', with the familiar streamlined boiler casing.*

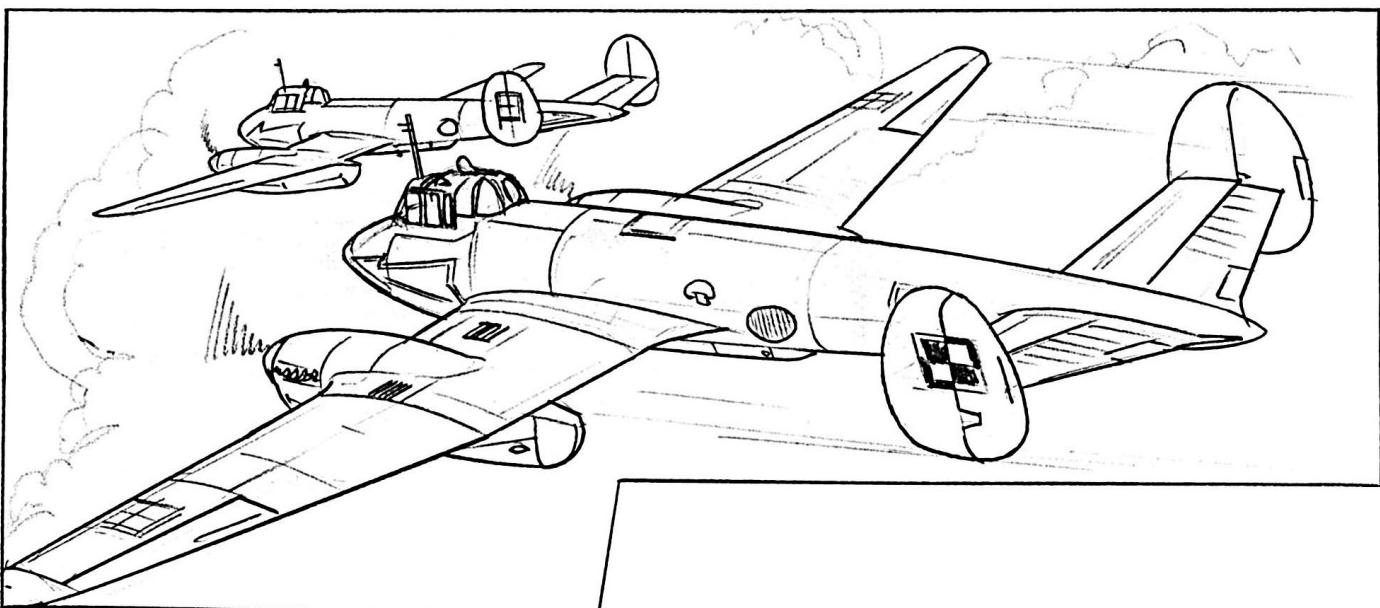


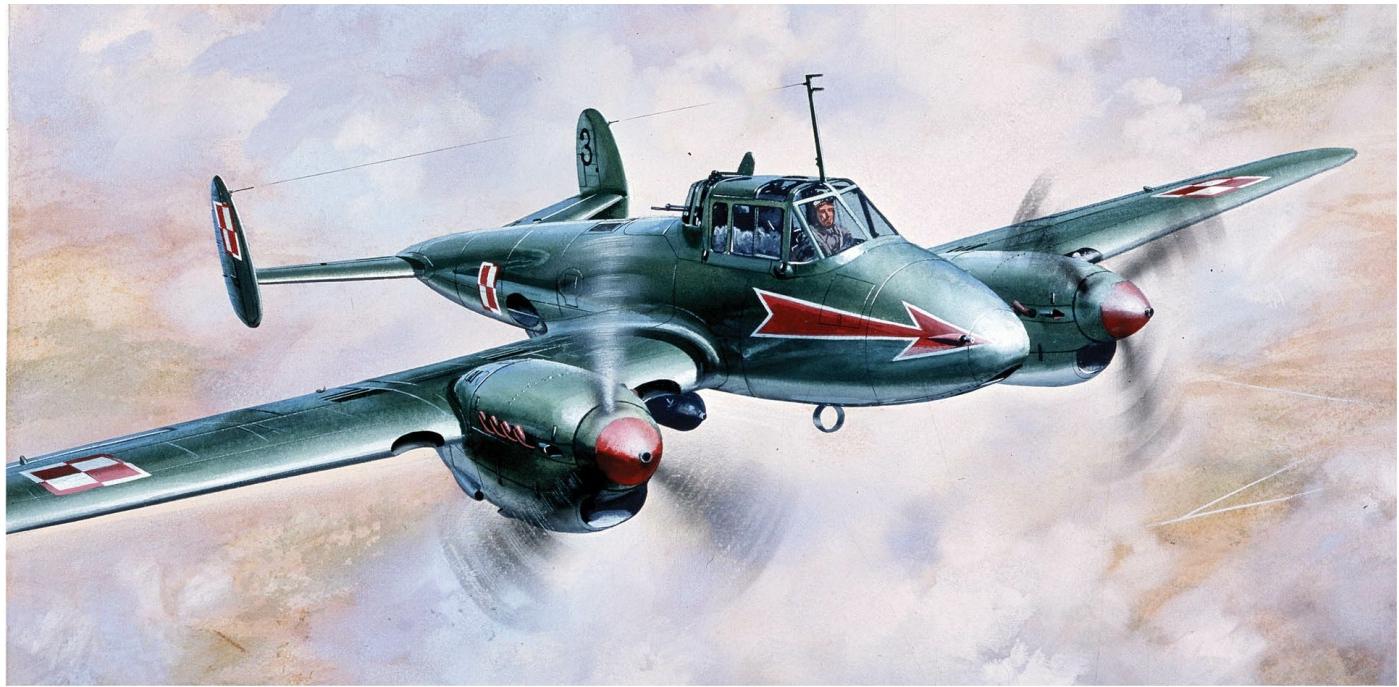
*Southern Railway's 'Schools'-class locomotive 'Harrow' of 1930, said to be the heaviest 4-4-0 type in Britain at the time. It was a 'grand steamer with all grades of coal' according to venerable railway author O.S. Nock. Named after famous public schools, the class included 'Eton' (the first of the type), 'Winchester', 'Tonbridge' and 'Westminster' within the first series. Later deliveries included schools such as 'Rugby' and 'Cheltenham', places outside the Southern Railway's operating area. Locomotives were not a favourite of mine to paint: too many wheels and therefore ellipses!*





Above and below, two famous Russian aircraft made in large numbers. Above, the Ilyushin Il-28 light bomber of the early post-war era used two VK-1 centrifugal-flow jet engines that doubtless owed much to the Rolls-Royce Derwent and Nene engines controversially sold to the Soviets to help modernize their military aeroplanes. It replaced the Petlyakov Pe-2 (below) of 1941, which served as a dive-bomber, for tactical reconnaissance and as a night-fighter. It had a long life, serving in large numbers with Eastern Bloc air forces post-war. The sketches show various alternatives that were not selected for final artwork stage.





*I did the artwork not only for the usual construction kits but also for what were called 'playsets', including the Wild West set above and the Sahara set below. The sets included a snap-together fort and ready to paint OO/HO figures, and even a*

*covered wagon in the Wild West set. These illustrations are reproductions from printer's proofs of actual box tops, since no transparencies have come to light.*





-CROSS-

-CROSS-

*Using all the Boeing Company's resources to develop and construct, the classic Model 707 was the aircraft that established the company's current reputation and ushered in the modern age of commercial jet aviation. Over 1,000 were built, excluding military transports, in the period 1958–1979. As was sometimes the case with contemporary models, changes of livery and kit decals necessitated retouching of the fuselage from BOAC to British Airways markings.*



*A side elevation of another civil aviation classic aircraft, the Vickers Viscount.*



*As with the Boeing 707 above, I suspect fuselage decals had been altered after the original artwork was submitted for this Lockheed Tristar, which was among the last paintings I completed for Airfix. Designed originally in 1968 for short/medium range routes, the Tristar was rapidly converted the following year for intercontinental routes. The tail position for the third Rolls-Royce turbofan was an unusual and distinguishing feature.*

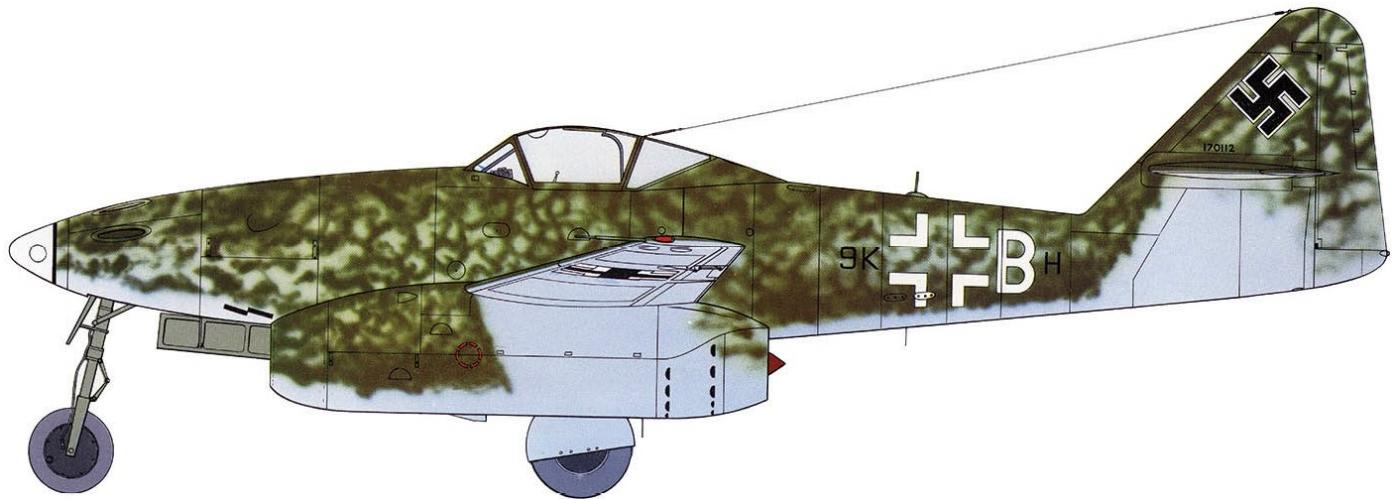


*The first de Havilland Comet, the D.H.88, winner of the 1934 MacRobertson England–Australia Trophy race.*

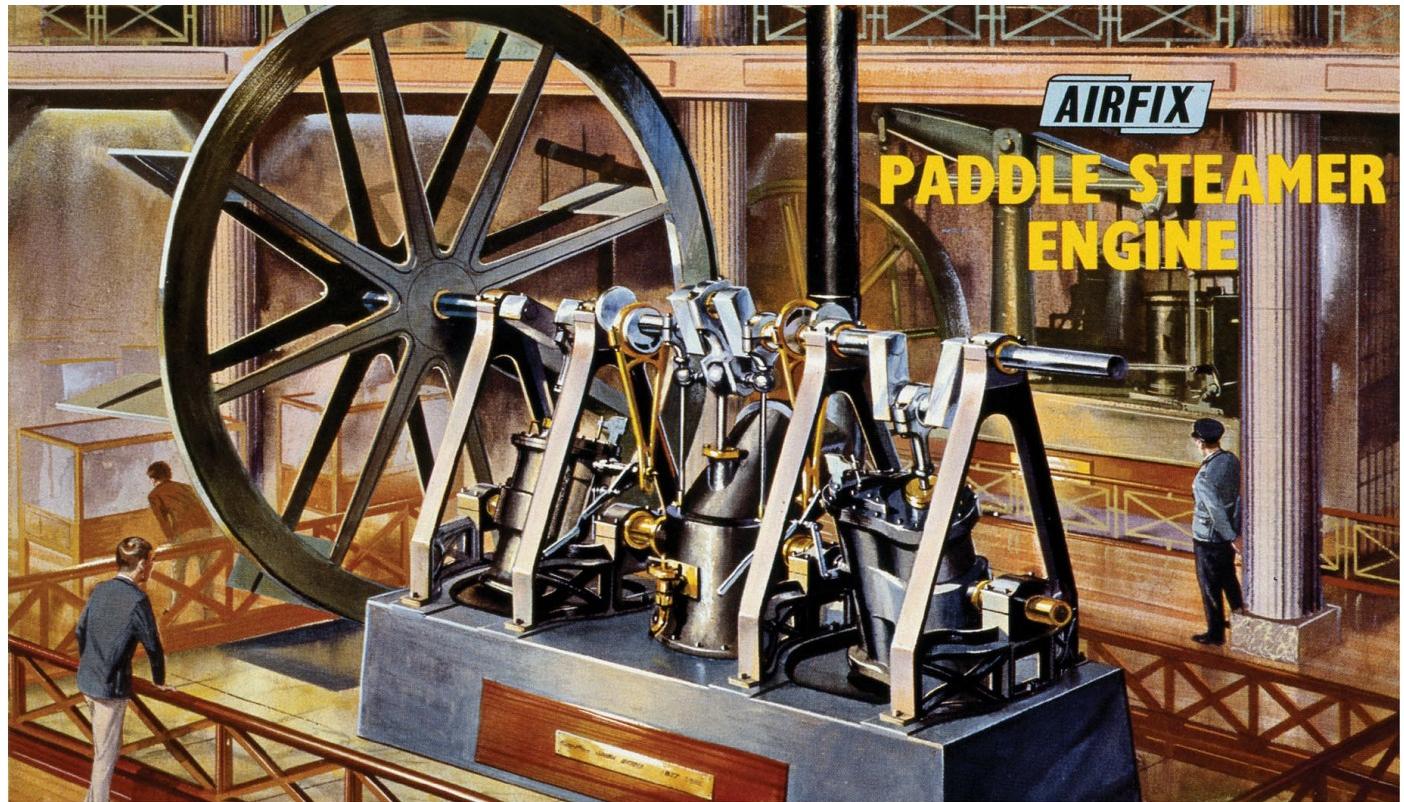


*Contrary to popular opinion, wartime Germany was well ahead in some respects in the new field of jet propulsion, so much so that the talented Willy Messerschmitt was*

able to have a thoroughly practical prototype twin-jet fighter of quite astonishing performance potential, the Me 262, flying in mid-1942. To an extent – thankfully so from the point of view of Allied air forces – German air ministry officials seemed blind to the 262's abilities. This picture has been 'sanitized' at some point to delete the 'action' element.



A side elevation of the Me 262A-2a (Junkers Jumo 004 B-1 engine) of Luftwaffe unit Kampfgeschwader 51 'Edelweiss'.



A change from the usual aeroplanes, ships and vehicles was a series of museum models featuring the beam engine and four-stroke engine, and the paddle steamer

*engine above, as featured on a proof box top. The latter model is described as 'fully working' – provided it was correctly assembled! The laudable intention was to reproduce in model form some of the most important and interesting types of mechanical inventions of history. Built by Joseph Maudslay in 1827, such an engine was later fitted to the Thames paddle steamer Endeavour, which ran between London and Richmond until 1840.*



*Another of the 'Playset' series, with a snap-together castle featuring Robin Hood and his merry men, evidently in dispute with the local sheriff's men-at-arms. The set included over seventy figures.*

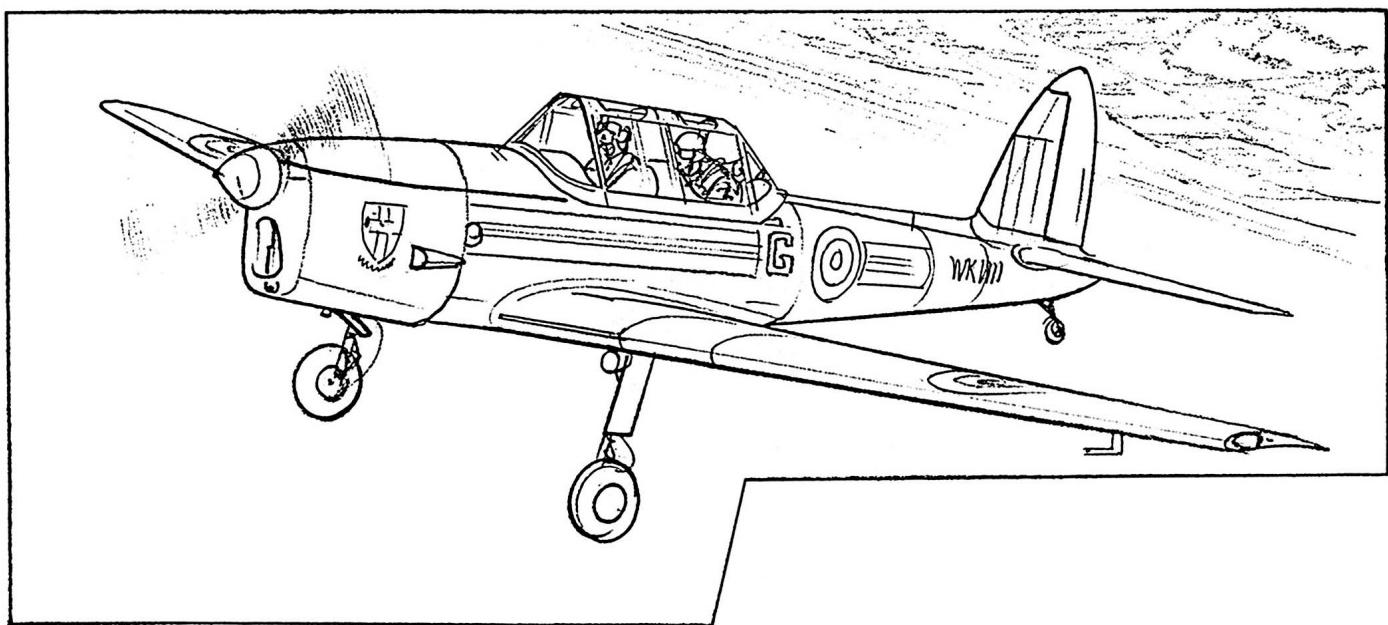


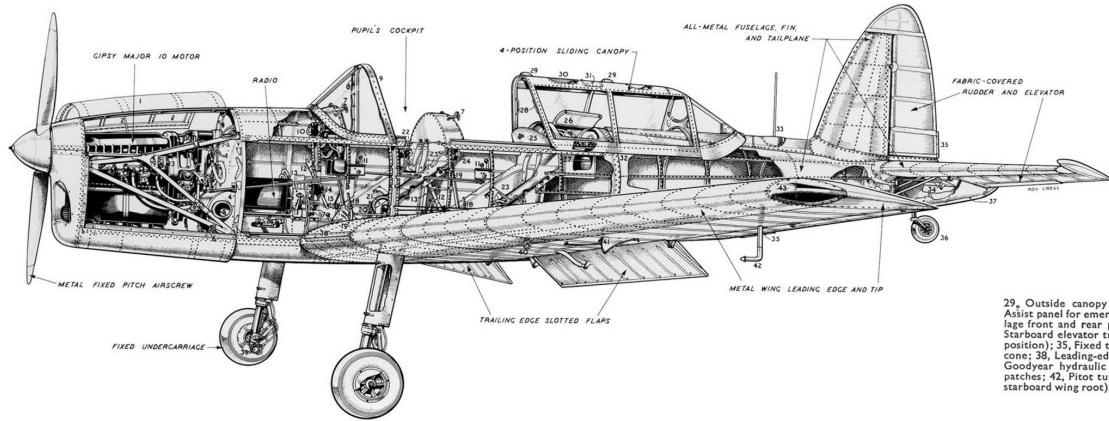
*These images illustrate the wide variety of kits produced by Airfix in the prolific 1960s and 1970s period. Above is the first issue of the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet with, below, the Orion III spacecraft from the classic movie 2001: A Space Odyssey.*





*With a view to the American market, the Cessna O-1 Bird Dog, which served in Korea and Vietnam, was reputedly named after the role the aircraft would play locating enemy positions in the manner of a 'bird dog' (gun dog) assisting game hunters. Here the O-1 is shown carrying 2.75in rockets under the wings.*



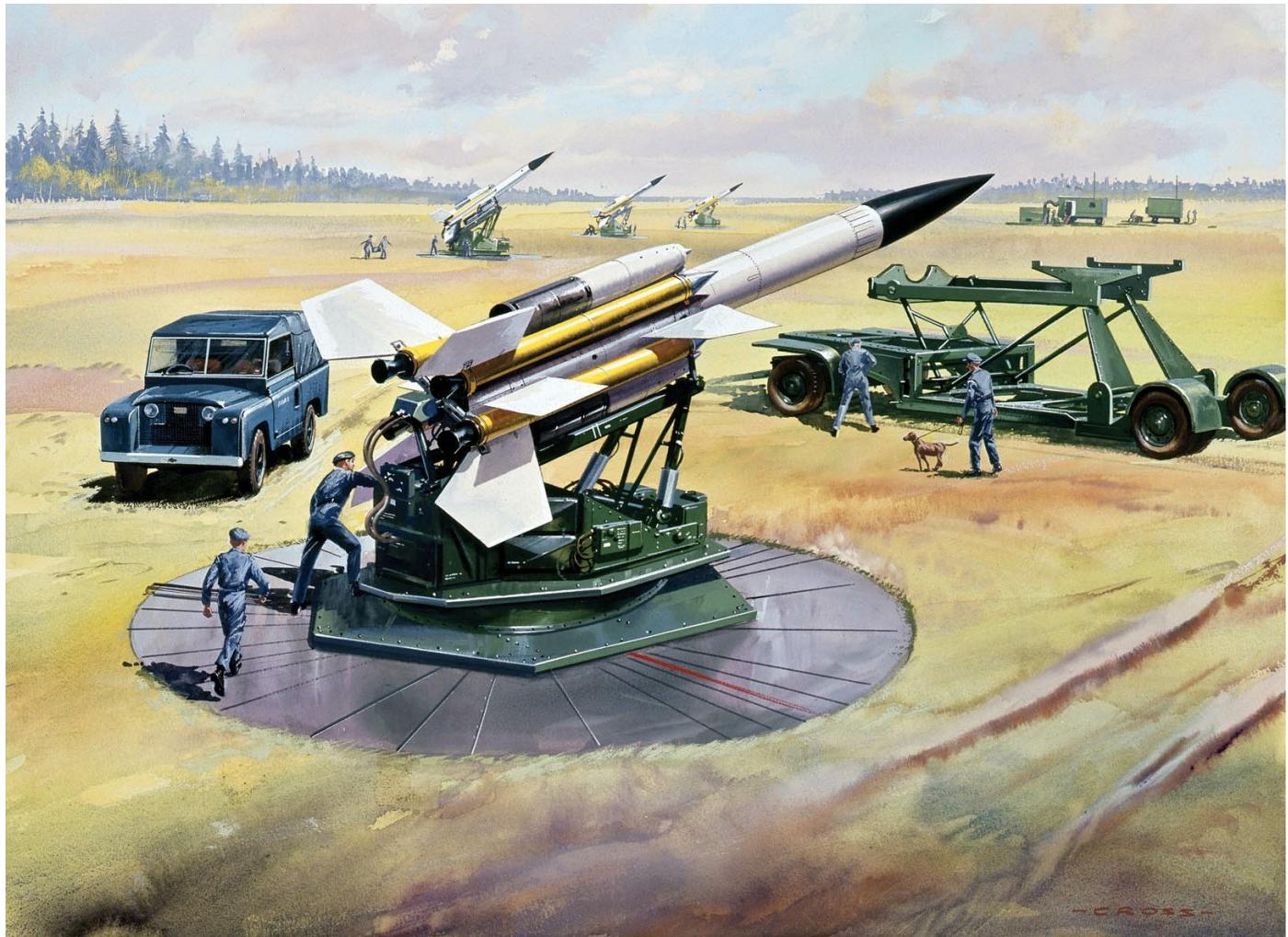


#### KEY TO CHIPMUNK CUTAWAY

- 1, Starboard side of engine cover opened up for inspection; 2, Support strut for engine cover; 3, Rubber bush engine mounts (see detail sketch below); 4, Oil tank; 5, Oil-cooler air intake; 6, Quartz instrument panel; 7, Instrument panel attachment lamps; 8, Amberinted transparent panel-attachment zipper (latest instrument flying-gear); 9, Turn-over truss built into windscreen frame; 10, Instrument panel including radio and flying panel; 11, Engine cowling; 12, Flaps levers; 13, Map cases; 14, Ground master switch; 15, Intercom plug-in; 16, Rudder bar; 17, Compass (bullet compass); 18, Gunner's seat; 19, Control column; 20, Fire extinguisher (front cockpit only); 21, Elevator trim wheel; 22, Fuse and switch box (navigation lights, identification light, etc.); 23, Navigation light; 24, Front cockpit instrument panel is duplicate of front one; 25, Rear locker door (locker is used on R.A.F. model for stowing the batteries); 26, Access doors to batteries; 27, Battery access; 28, Handholds for maintenance; 29, Outside canopy catch releases; 30, Amberinted top window; 31, Assist panel for emergency opening of canopy (see detail below); 32, Fuselage front and rear fairing joints; 33, Aerial for STR; 34, Starboard elevator trim tab (port one is identical and is fixed in neutral position); 35, Fixed tabs; 36, Fully castoring tail wheel; 37, Detachable tail cone; 38, Leading-edge airflow spoiler (stalls wing root before tip); 39, Goodyear hydraulic brakes; 40, Tie-down ring; 41, Zipper inspection patches; 42, Pitot tube; 43, Navigation light (identification lamp is beneath starboard wing root).

*Designed originally by de Havilland Canada, the Chipmunk became the RAF's standard ab initio trainer to replace the venerable Tiger Moth, and reputedly was even easier to handle. A visit to Hatfield in 1957 produced the cutaway drawing above.*





*The Bristol (BAC) Bloodhound became the standard RAF surface-to-air guided missile system in 1958. The Mk 2 version had improved performance and range with the Thor ramjet engine, and was air-transportable for swift reinforcement overseas. Bloodhound systems were also supplied to Sweden, Australia and Switzerland. A fine example is on display at the entrance to the RAF Museum at Hendon. The Airfix kit included launch platform, wheeled carrier, Land Rover tug and six figures as shown here.*



*I love the 'silver wings' biplanes of the 1930s, perhaps because my mother took me to several Hendon and Empire Air Day shows before the war. So it was a pleasure to paint the Bristol Bulldog for Airfix. This is an alternative rendering that was not accepted, but is at least as good as the published art. Replacing the obsolescent Gamecock and Siskin fighters of the 1920s, the Bulldog was first delivered to No. 3 Squadron RAF in 1929. The Finnish Mk IVA version actually went into action against Soviet aircraft in the Finno-Russian war of 1939.*



*Car models were a large part of Airfix output in the 1960s and I much enjoyed doing several pieces of art including the Indianapolis Motor Racing Set, the Aston Martin DB6 and the Alfa Romeo illustrated earlier in this [chapter](#). Veteran cars were a new venture and above is the 1904 Mercedes designed by Wilhelm Maybach, in this case sporting a lightweight two-seat body on the typical wide wheelbase and lowered chassis that made for excellent roadworthiness.*



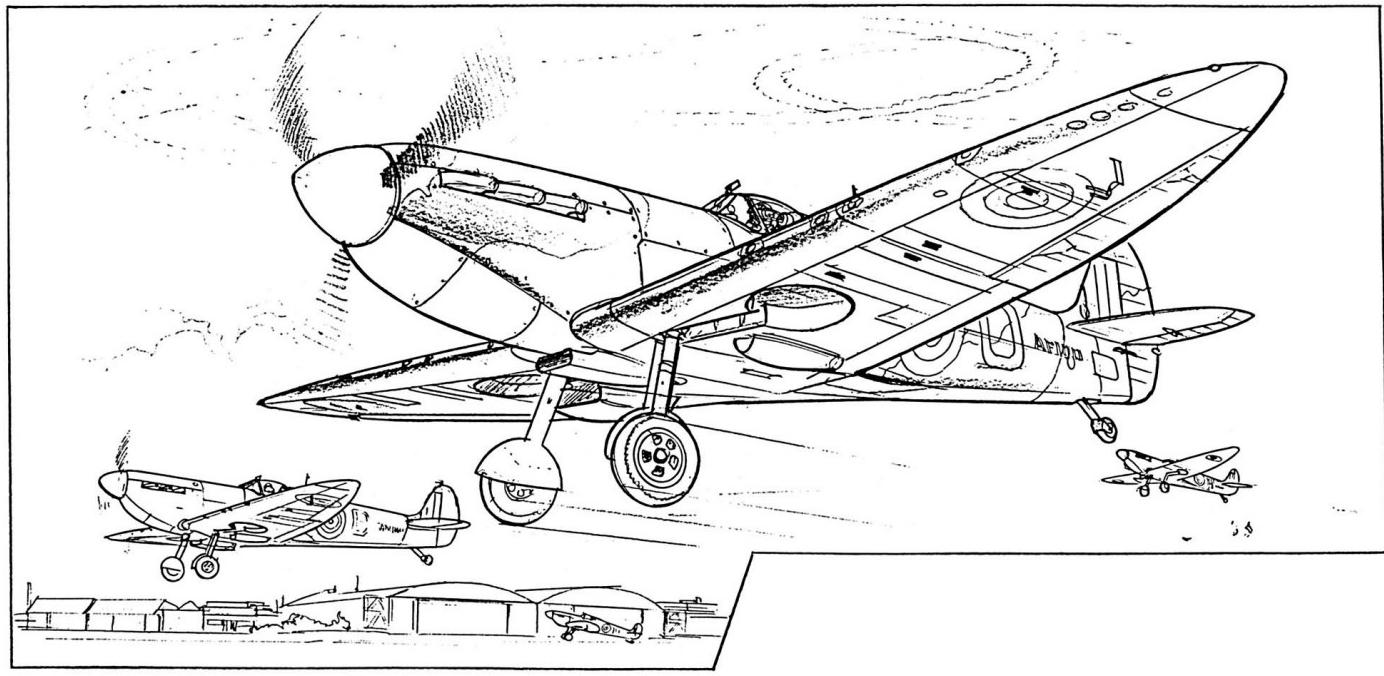
*The Airfix design team, whenever possible, would have viewed and measured the prototype on the spot – much easier for a motor car than for an aeroplane! Regarding the latter, I still retain several of the general arrangement drawings which were the starting point for the individual kit parts designs and which helped me to sketch various ideas for the finished art. The 1904 Darracq was modelled on the famous Genevieve, immortalized in the popular British film of that name starring Kenneth More.*



*The 73ft Vosper motor torpedo boat was the first of a brand new Airfix series, 6ft to the inch scale, introduced in 1972, including an RAF rescue launch and a German E-boat. Torpedo tubes, twin Oerlikon cannon and machine guns were all faithfully reproduced. These boats were powered by three supercharged Packard V12 engines giving them a top speed of 38–40kt. The kit contained 162 parts in all.*

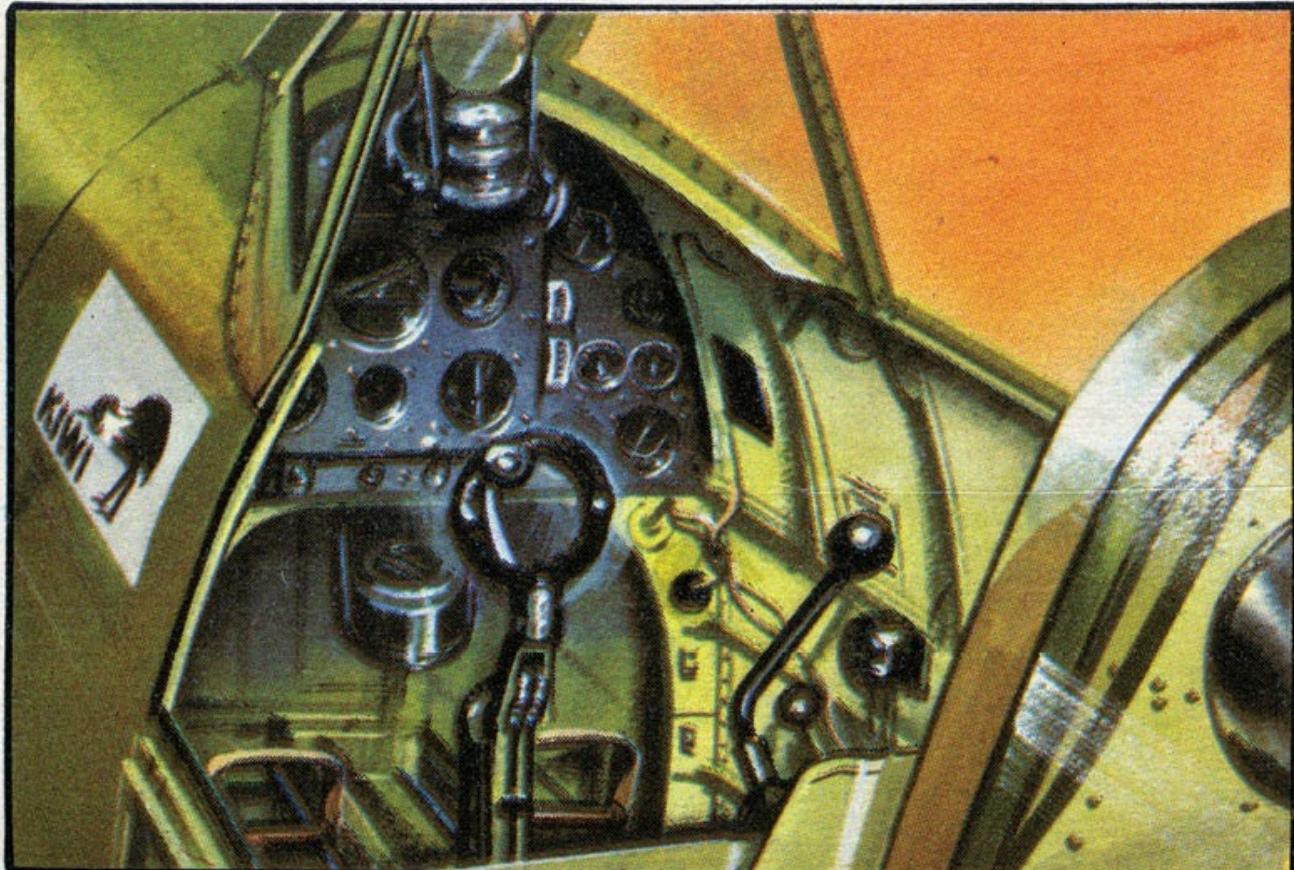


*The 5,000-ton guided-missile destroyer Rommel of the German Bundesmarine. She was one of three vessels of the numerous 'Charles F. Adams' class ordered from the USA and built by Bath Iron Works. Five more of the class were to have been built by West German shipyards, but the order was cancelled in 1968. Her sister ships were Lütjens and Mölders, all of them armed with two 5in dual-purpose rapid fire guns and a Tartar anti-aircraft missile launcher.*

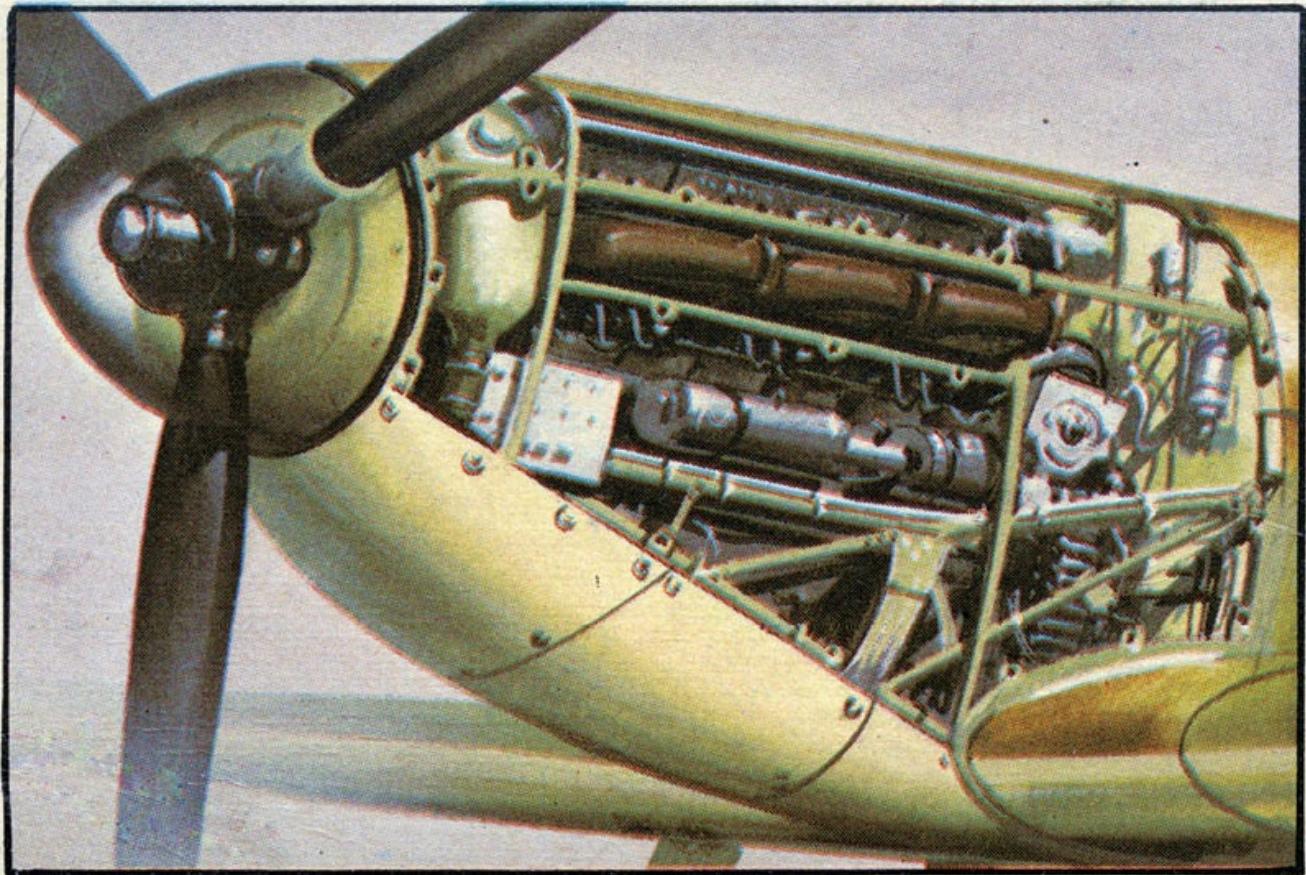


*First of the 1/24 scale 'Super Kits' introduced in 1970 was the Supermarine Spitfire*

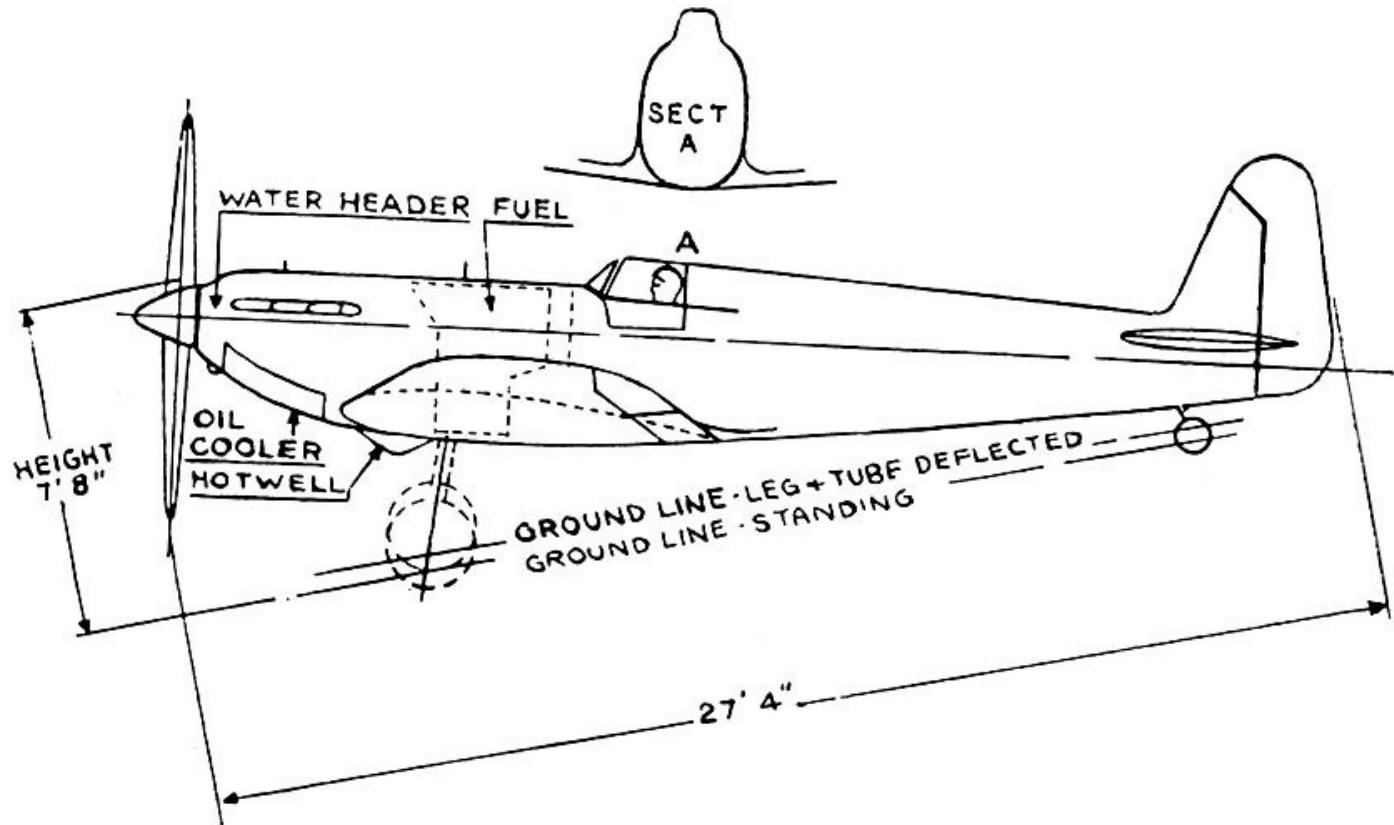
*Mk.1a (above, top) with an 18in wingspan, an accurately modelled Merlin engine and an electric motor to power the propeller. The fully detailed cockpit had a sliding canopy, the undercarriage was retractable and wing guns fully detailed. Above (bottom) is an alternative idea and, below, two details from the box sides of included features.*



**COCKPIT INTERIOR**



**FULLY DETAILED ENGINE**



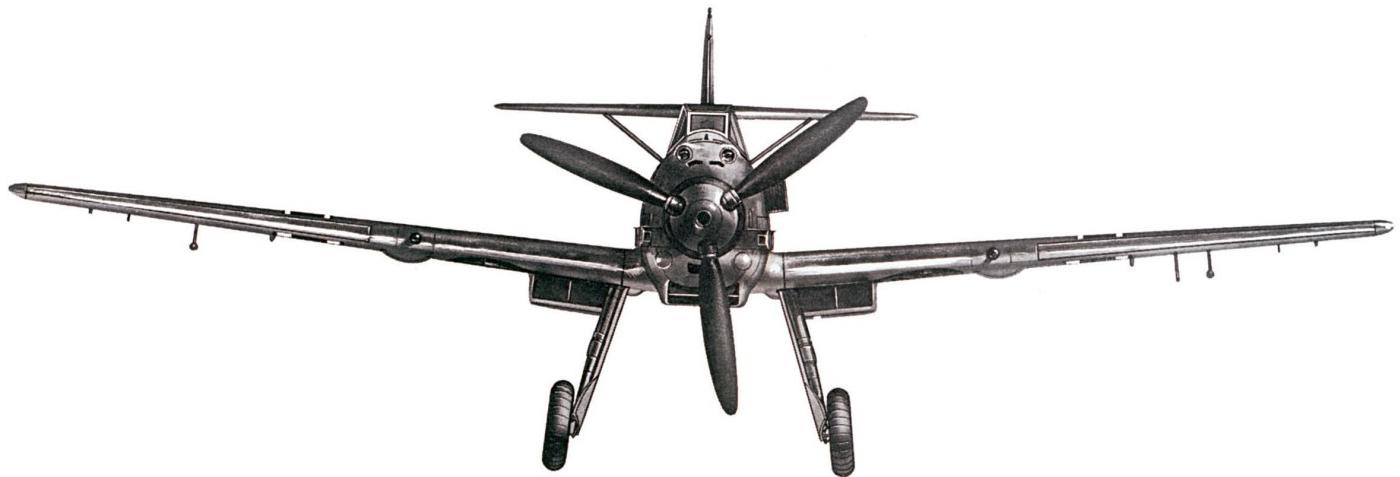
*As a matter of interest, a Supermarine side elevation of designer R.J. Mitchell's initial 1934 proposal, with straight wings and angular tail.*

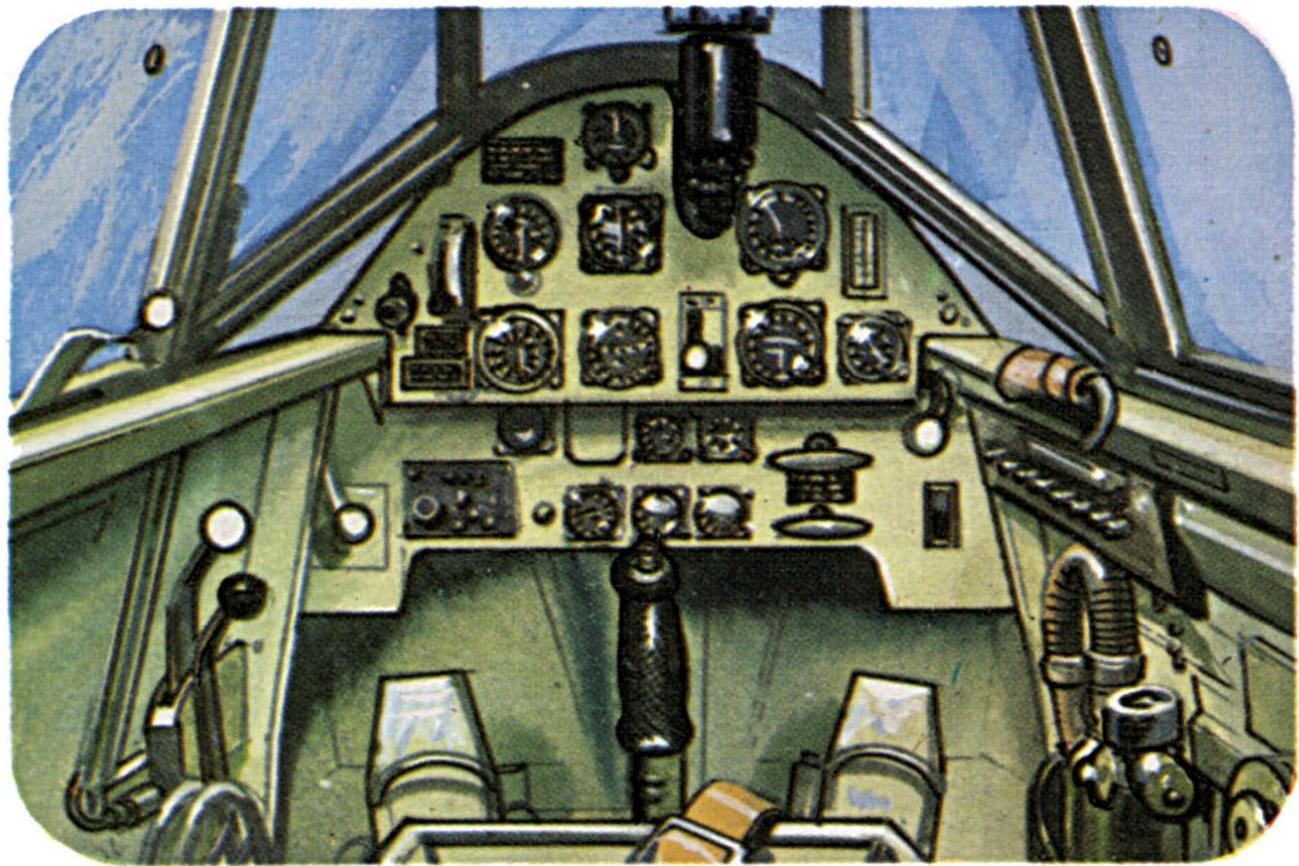


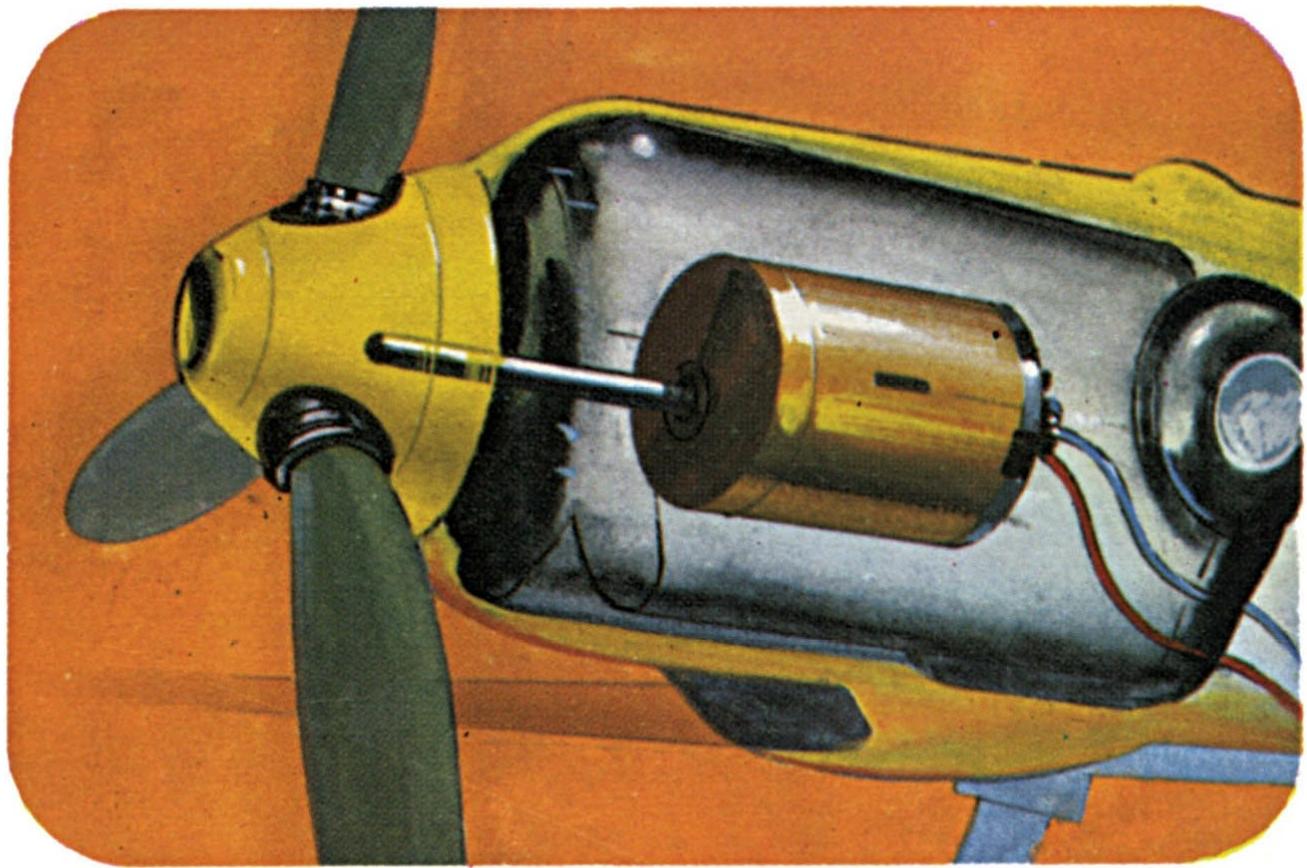
*In The Vintage Years of Airfix Box Art, art was introduced for an Airfix range of motorcycle kits, the classic BMW R-69 and the BSA C15 – a new art venture for me. Here are two more from this series. The Honda CB450 above (first issued as a kit in 1969) had a top speed of 110mph with the 45bhp straight-twin engine; it confirmed the Japanese technical ascendancy in motorcycle manufacture.*



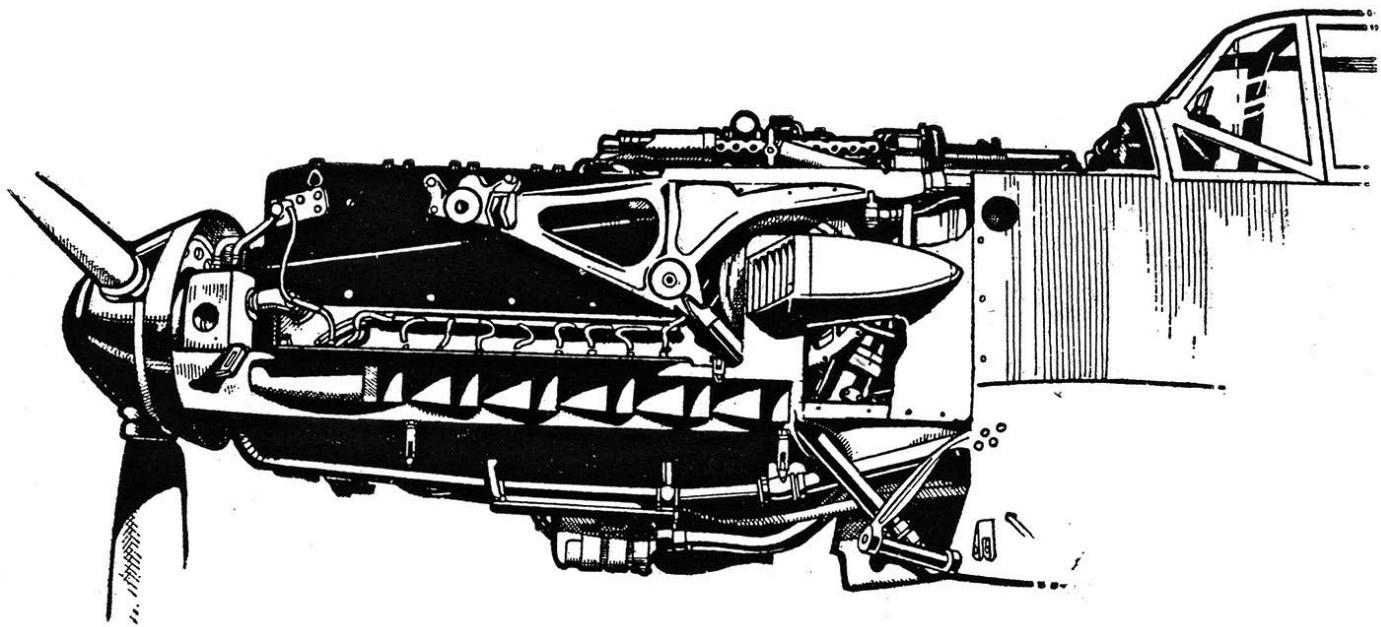
*The Ariel Arrow, the original of which was proclaimed motorcycle of the year in 1960, not least because vestiges of streamlining emphasized its good looks.*







The 1/24 scale Messerschmitt Bf 109e was an obvious successor to the Spitfire Mk.1a kit and below (bottom) is one of two different box paintings I did in sequence. Box-side details of the 150-part kit are reproduced above, and a line drawing of the Daimler Benz engine is shown below (top). The 1.5v motor to rotate the propeller had to be bought separately.

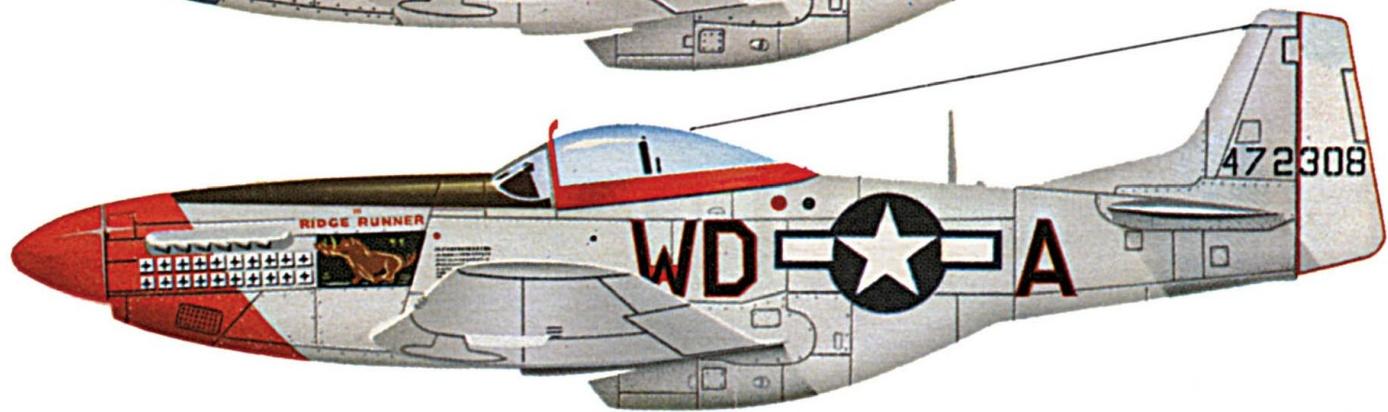
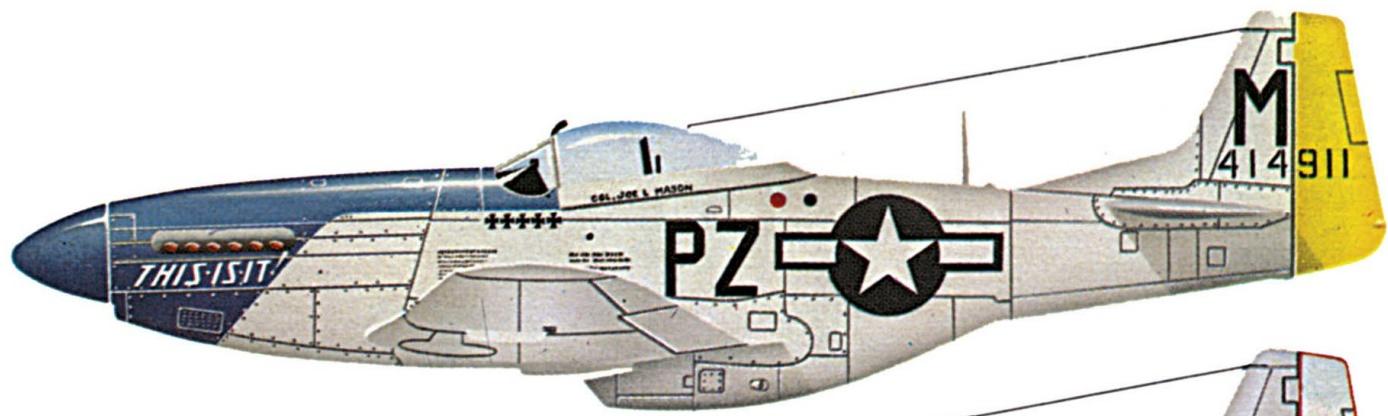


ME BF109E

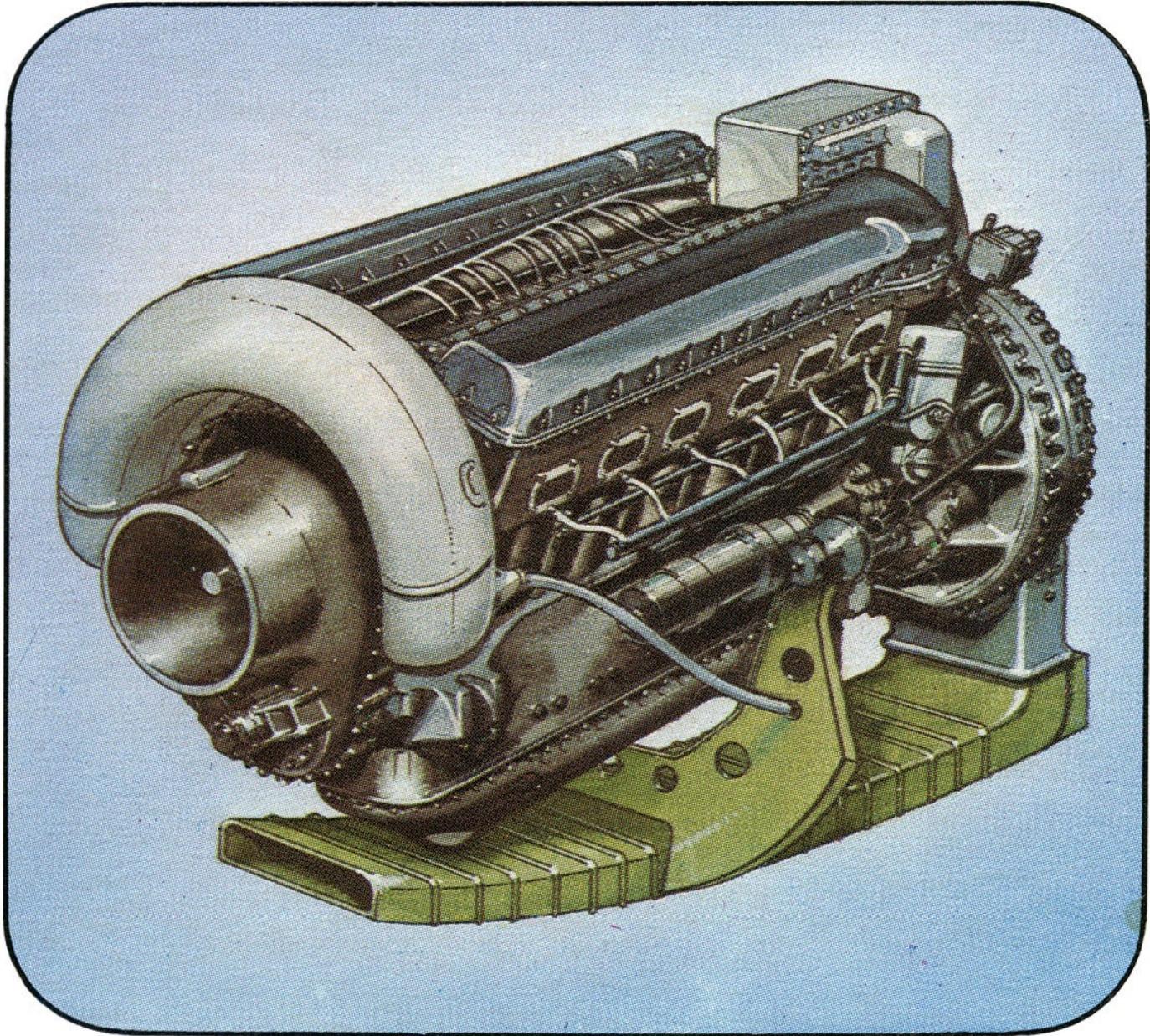
24<sup>th</sup>  
SCALE



*P&O's liner Canberra was the largest post-war passenger ship when she was launched in 1960; she had to be based at Southampton because she was too big for P&O's normal base at Tilbury. Her maiden voyage was to Sydney, Auckland, the US West Coast and back via Suez to Southampton. During the 1960s she was employed on a mixed programme of cruises and line voyages to Australia and the Pacific, including carrying thousands of Britons emigrating under the assisted passage scheme whereby £10 was paid towards the cost of the ticket. Famously, Canberra served as a troopship during the Falklands conflict of 1982; she remained in P&O service until 1997. One of the Airfix 'Famous Ships' series, the completed model was 16½in long and even included transfers for the deck games markings.*



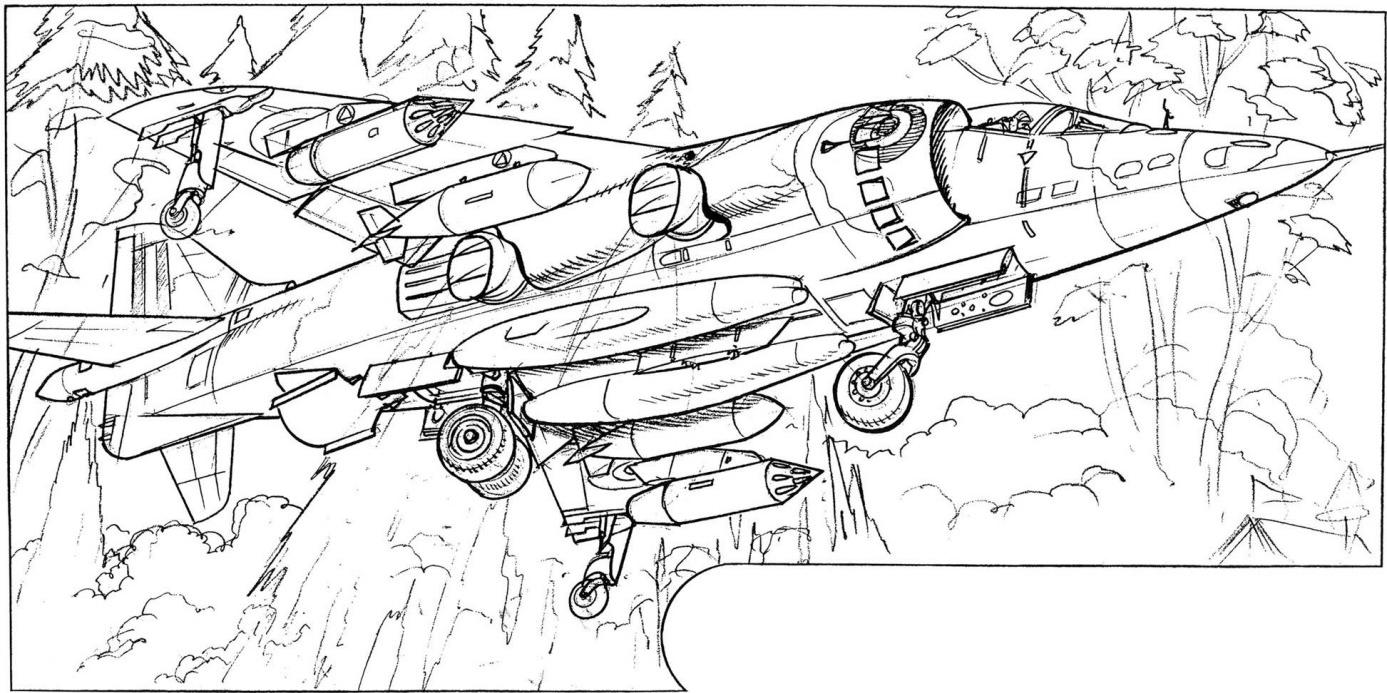


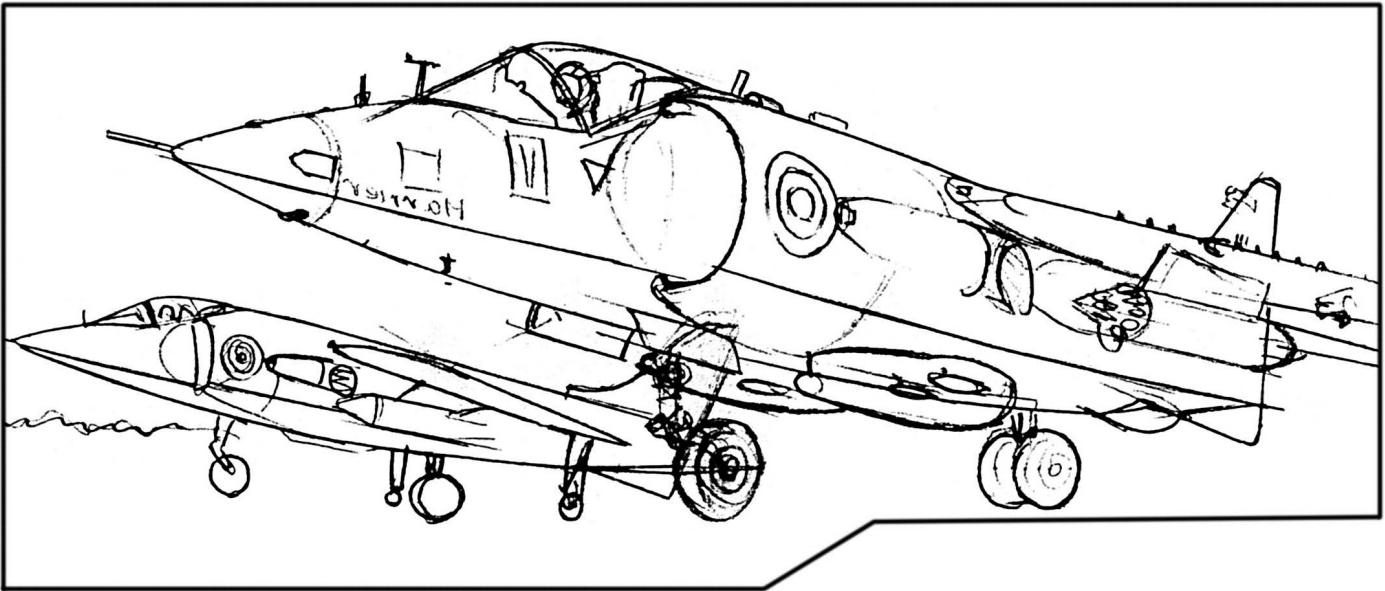


Third of the aircraft 1/24 scale series was the North American P-51D 'Mustang'. Again I did two box top paintings although I am not sure whether or not both were used in sequence. Here are the box side illustrations and side elevations for the different colour schemes provided. Below: A smaller box kit illustration of a P-51D-15-NA 'Mustang' with the distinctive markings of American ace Major George E. Preddy, commander of the 328th Fighter Squadron, Eighth Air Force, 1944.

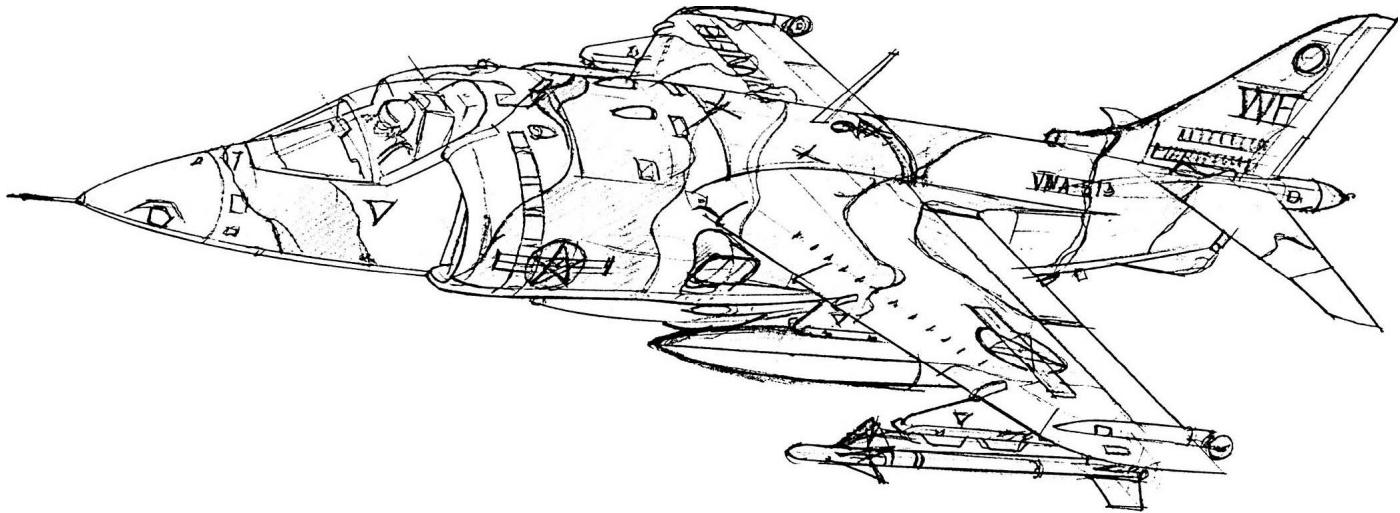


-ROY CROSS-





Airfix did various scale models of the Hawker Harrier due to its news value and unique abilities as a fixed wing V/STOL strike fighter. Obviously it had great sales potential and indeed the model is still available today. Above is the art for a Series Two kit of 1969 and above that and below are other ideas, at least one of which was accepted for finished art.



*A cruiser helicopter vessel, the Moscow class Moskva kit appeared in 1973 in the same series as Canberra and Prinz Eugen. She ran her sea trials in July 1967, displaced 15,000 tons, had a 270-295 flight deck aft of the superstructure and a 20–30 ASW helicopter capacity. She also doubled as a guided missile cruiser with three surface-to-air missile launchers on the foredeck.*



*The Airfix model of HMS Belfast appeared in 1973, one of the Series Four warship series. An improvement on the Royal Navy 'Southampton' class, upon completion in 1939 she was the largest cruiser in the service. Upon being severely damaged in wartime with a broken back from a mine, she was extensively rebuilt with increased beam, improving the ship's stability and played an important role in the naval action leading to the destruction of the Scharnhorst. Another extensive refit was undertaken from 1956 with a new operations room, lattice masts, a new covered bridge and uprated armament. Twelve 6in guns were mounted in the fore and aft turrets. Again refitted in 1963, she later voyaged to Portsmouth to become Headquarters of the Commodore Reserve Ships. A Trust acquired the ship in 1971 as a permanent floating museum and she can be visited moored near Tower Bridge on the Thames. Other vessels in the same Airfix series included Graf Spee and Ark Royal for both of which I did the box art.*



*Capable of coping with the toughest and most inhospitable terrain, a universal car used worldwide after production began in 1908, the Ford Model T was produced for nearly 20 years in various guises. Its genius was to put great design skill into making the simplest yet most rugged structure, and the pioneering of new mass production techniques in the automotive industry. Over 15,000,000 were made during its life cycle – low cost and reliability were the watchwords. Airfix chose to base their model as illustrated on the two-seat ‘runabout’ with a third ‘dickey’ seat in the rear for occasional use. Below: My box top for the Austin Maxi. I also did the artwork for the Ford Escort and Ford Capri in the same series.*



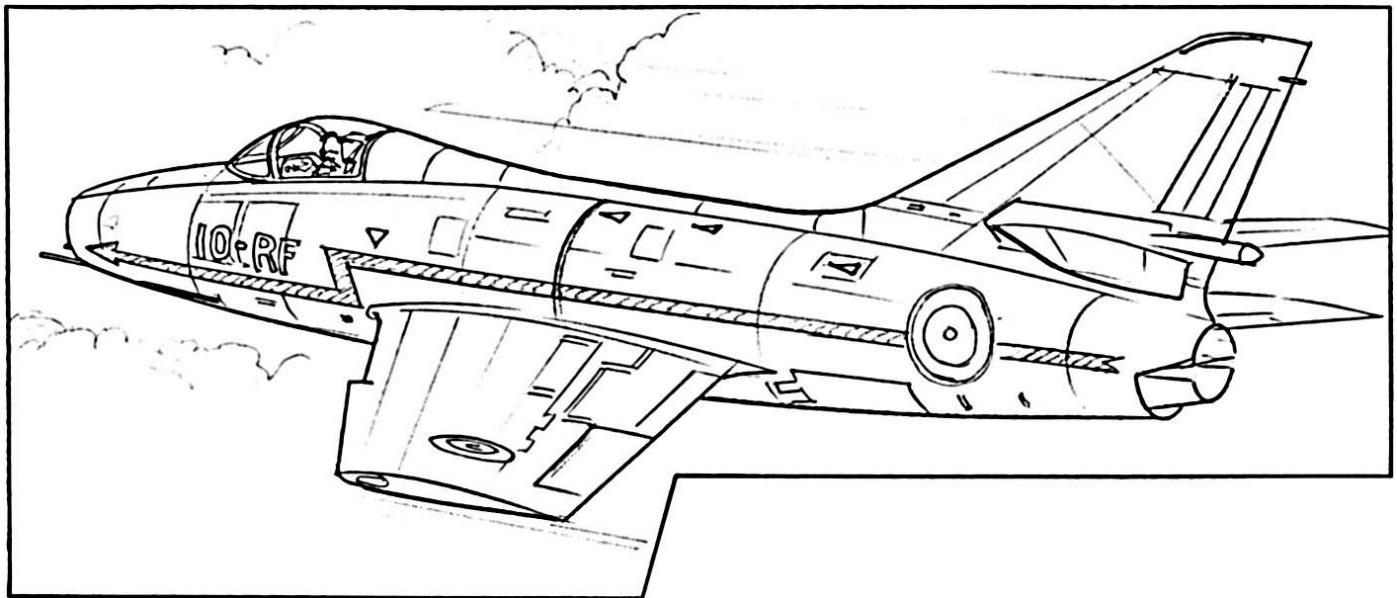
**AIRFIX-32 SCALE**  
**AUSTIN MAXI**



The graceful and aptly named 'Gazelle' was designed and produced jointly by Aérospatiale in France and Westland in Britain as an all-purpose five-seater lightweight helicopter designated SA341, with some input from Bölkow in Germany. It is said there was some confusion between the French and British design teams because in 1965 metric measurements were not widely in use this side of the Channel! Altogether Westland built 294 Gazelles before production ceased there in 1984. They served with the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and the RAF as well as in a civil capacity.



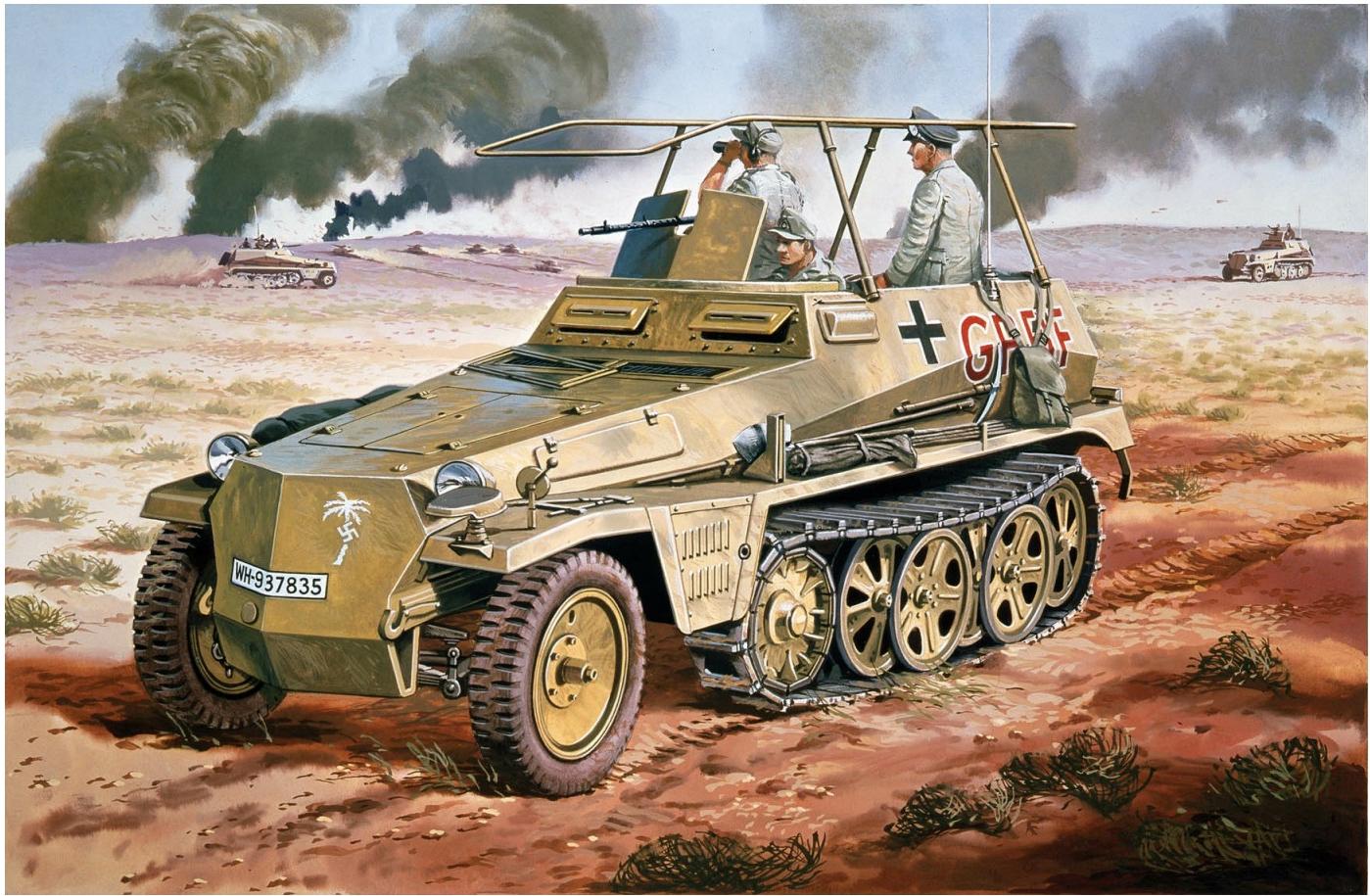
*Two French beauties – the 'Super Mystère' B.2 went into service with the French Air Force in 1957 and was said to be the first West European production single seat fighter capable of achieving Mach 1 performance in level flight, powered by a 9,700lb.s.t. SNECMA Atar 101G jet. It served also with the Israeli Air Force and as usual the kit had a choice of transfers for both countries. Below: Another idea that was not accepted.*



The Airfix Dassault Mirage IIIC kit first emerged in 1964 and this art is a 1973 remake painted towards the end of my tenure with the company. Said to have been inspired by the British Fairey FD-2 World Speed Record research aircraft with its thin delta wing, in its numerous versions the Mirage was one of the world's most widely exported supersonic multi-role jets.



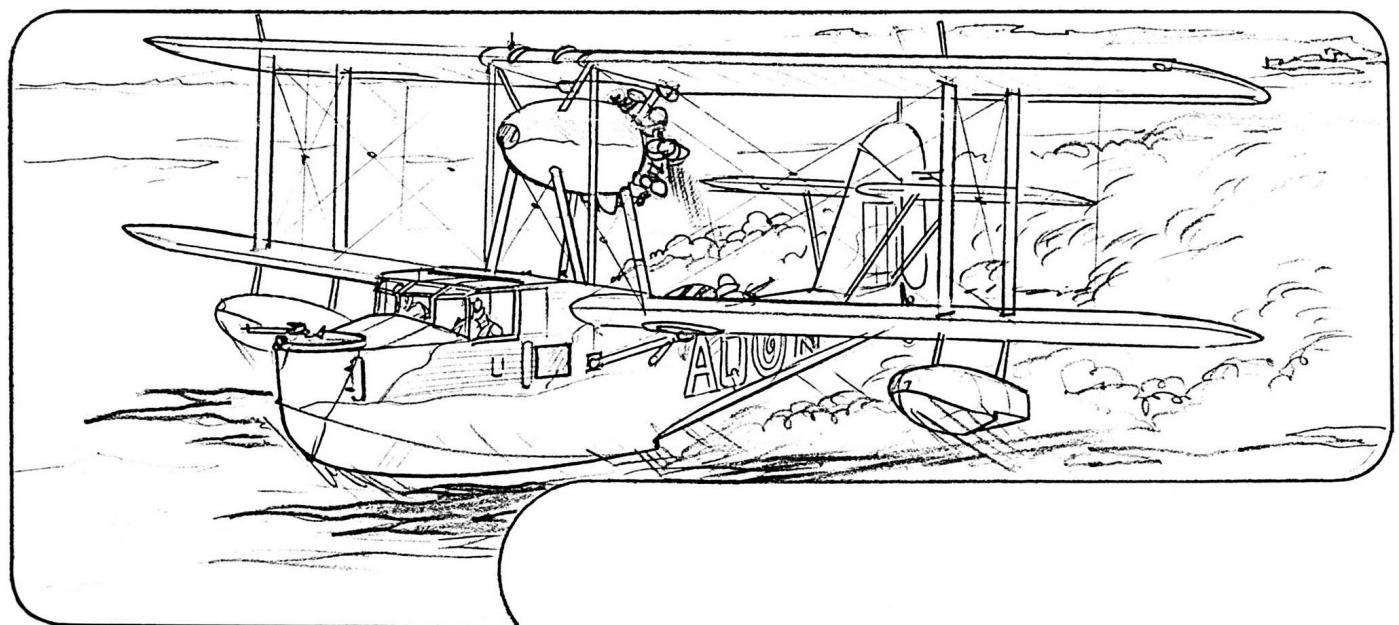
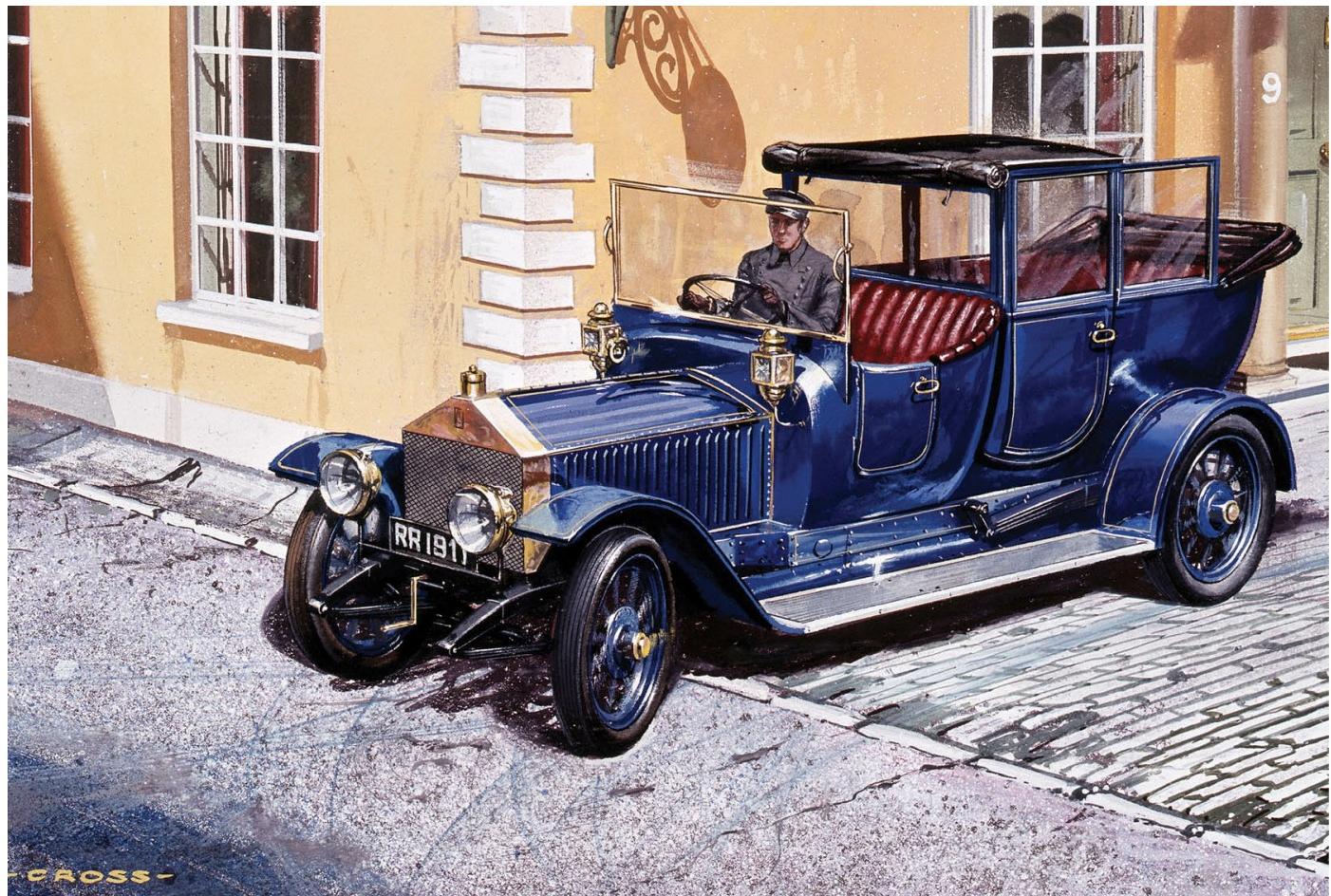
*The German reconnaissance set kit was issued in 1974 about the same time as the Spitfire Vb in Polish markings, the Scottish Aviation 'Bulldog' and the Sopwith 'Pup'. The reconnaissance set comprised of an SdKfz222 armoured car and a Volkswagen Kubelwagen plus finely detailed Africa Korps figures. The Kfz mounted a 2cm Kwk L/55 cannon as its main turret armament plus a 7.92mm co-axial machine gun. The usual antenna over the open turret was not included probably because of difficulties moulding such a fine component to scale.*

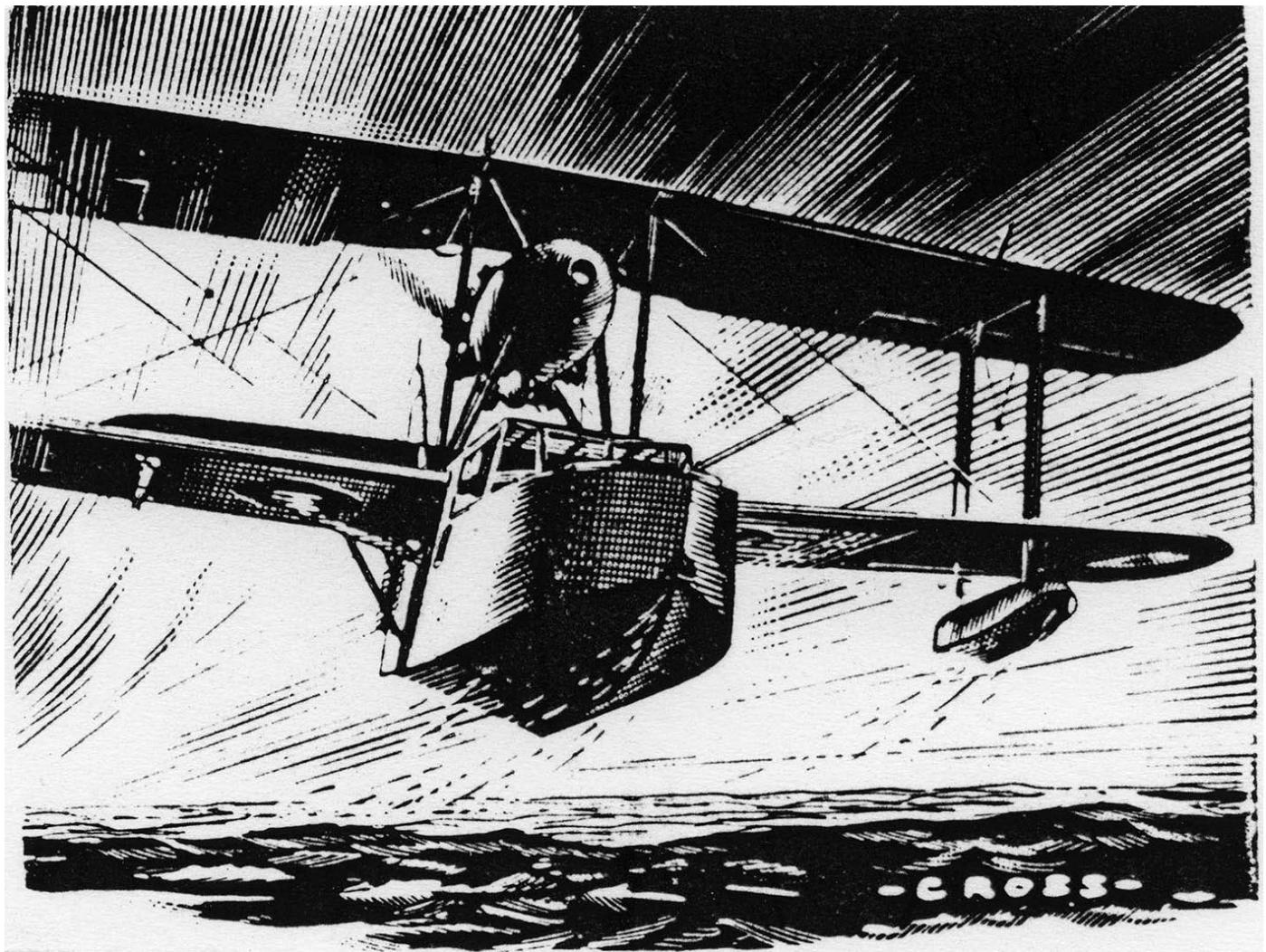


Rommel's half-track followed in 1975. The SdKfz251 was the standard Wehrmacht half-tracked armoured personnel carrier; front wheels were backed by flexible endless tracks making it suitable for rugged terrain. Within the armoured body were two front seats for the driver and commander with longitudinal bench seats behind for the troops. Power came from a 100hp Maybach petrol engine. The usual 12-man crew had two machine guns; there was a mortar carrier variant; a specialized radio command vehicle, as here identified by the frame antenna; and a version carrying a powerful 75mm anti-tank weapon. In general the basic SdKfz251 was a maid-of-all-work vehicle used on all fronts and in many guises, especially in conjunction with the tank units of the Panzer formations.



*It is said that Henry Ford made the most cars but Rolls-Royce made the best, the latter being true up to the present day. F.H. Royce from the beginning strove for absolute smoothness and silence for his engines aided by a team of superb and dedicated craftsmen. For the body, purchasers had a choice of fine British coachbuilders, in this case an open four-seat tourer, one of which type came second in the 1905 T.T. race. Below is a special body landaulette Rolls of 1911 with the fine six-cylinder low compression side-valve engine of 40hp.*



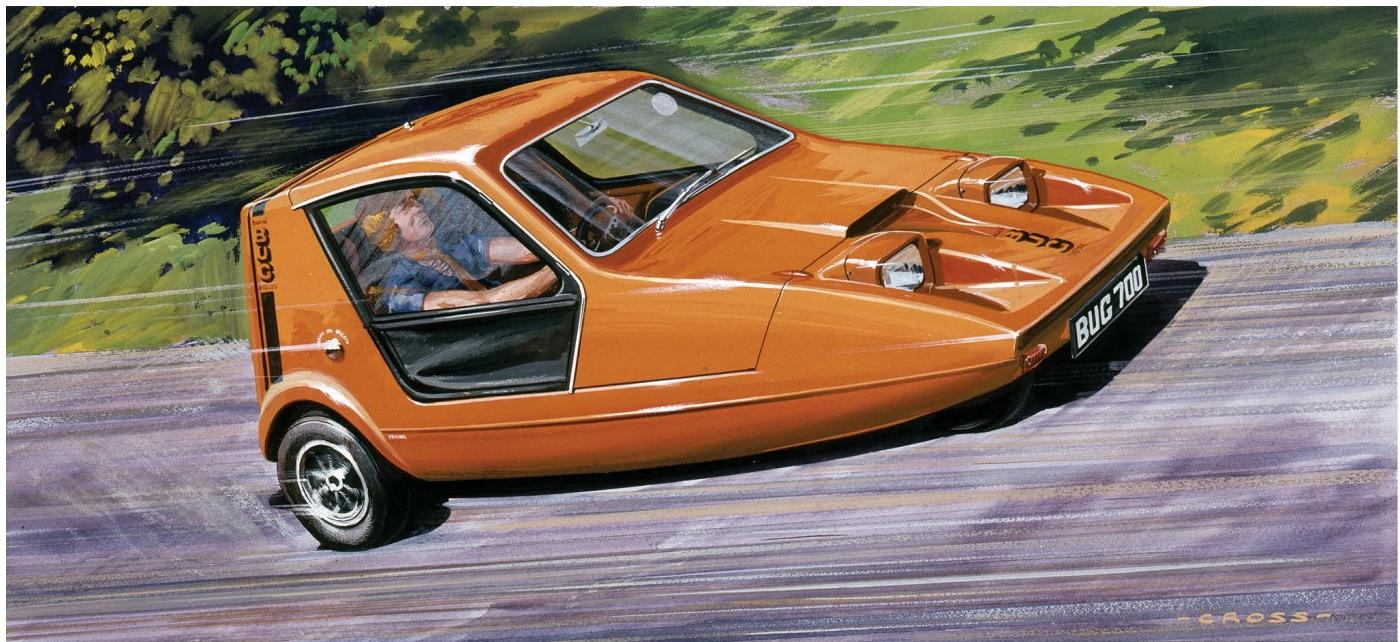


Many a downed airman in the sea during World War Two was heartened by the sight of an air-sea rescue Supermarine 'Walrus', the dear old 'Shagbat', searching for him. It was designed by R.J. Mitchell, as far as can be imagined in contrast to his sleek-lined Schneider Trophy racers and Spitfire fighter. The original specification was for a flying boat amphibian for shipboard use from a catapult, with advanced hull design for good seaworthiness and folding wings for easy stowage aboard ship. Initially intended for the Royal Australian Air Force and Navy for reconnaissance and communications duties as the 'Seagull', it soon attracted orders from the RAF and Royal Navy as the 'Walrus'. Above is an alternative study-which well showed the enclosed cabin and the 'pusher' power plant. With the wheeled undercarriage deployed she could be used ashore and there is a record of two on the carrier Ark Royal, being flown off the flight deck.





The 'fun car' Beach Buggy made a small model and the original was obviously in fashion when the kit appeared in 1975, yet it seemed an odd choice when so many popular cars could have been chosen. I remember, for example, doing art for the Volkswagen Beetle early on, and for the Renault Dauphine, Morris Marina and Ford Cortina. Another topical choice was the Bond Bug 700E three-wheeler below, which the catalogue also described as a 'fun car, a light practical two-seater with a top speed of 70mph [it could be driven with a motorcycle licence], the kit including detailed engine and chassis, suspension and a driver figure'.



*The Maserati 'Indy' model issued in 1973.*

# *Variations*

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**A**S MENTIONED earlier, quite a lot of work was done before arriving at the final illustration. Here are some of the intermediate sketches, ‘studies’ or ‘roughs’ additional to those that intersperse the main part of the book. Below are two sketches of the Folland Gnat for separate versions of the actual kit, the changes being made to enhance the full sales potential and prolong the life of the same basic moulding. The box art always showed markings identical to the kit transfers and colouring instructions, so that the purchaser knew exactly what he was getting.

Topicality could be another reason to reissue a kit with new artwork and transfers, the famous Red Arrows being an obvious example for an advantageous change from the usual RAF markings. While I was working for Airfix the 1/24 scale aircraft series was introduced, meaning new artwork for familiar types such as the Hurricane and Spitfire. Below is the pencil ‘rough’ for the 1/24 Hurricane, which in fact did not make it to final artwork stage. In the course of my time with Airfix, hundreds of these studies were made, always with the difficulty of composing fresh images within the restricted area of the box top as mentioned earlier. Yet another reason to change the artwork could be to boost flagging sales. Some kits still in the current range have had several package changes, as well as refinement of the mouldings. Much of my early work was re-illustrating the old line package headers to give them new appeal.

The start of any commission was to travel up to the Wandsworth drawing office and there confer with John Edwards, drawing office manager and researcher, and later Jack Armitage, where preliminary design blueprints for the mouldings were underway, and John and the draftsmen would gather round to discuss a few ideas for the final art. I came away with copy prints, marking details and any reference photographs available. One of the reasons we got on so well was that I was well versed in aviation technical matters through many years in the business and already had extensive files and a reference library to back up their material. When I wasn’t so well informed, say with tanks or vintage cars, I relied more on their reference material. Where possible John and his colleagues would have travelled to the factory or source to methodically measure up and photograph the original, such was their search for accuracy in the final model. Sometimes first pressings were available to me to take away, and occasionally an assembled prototype model.

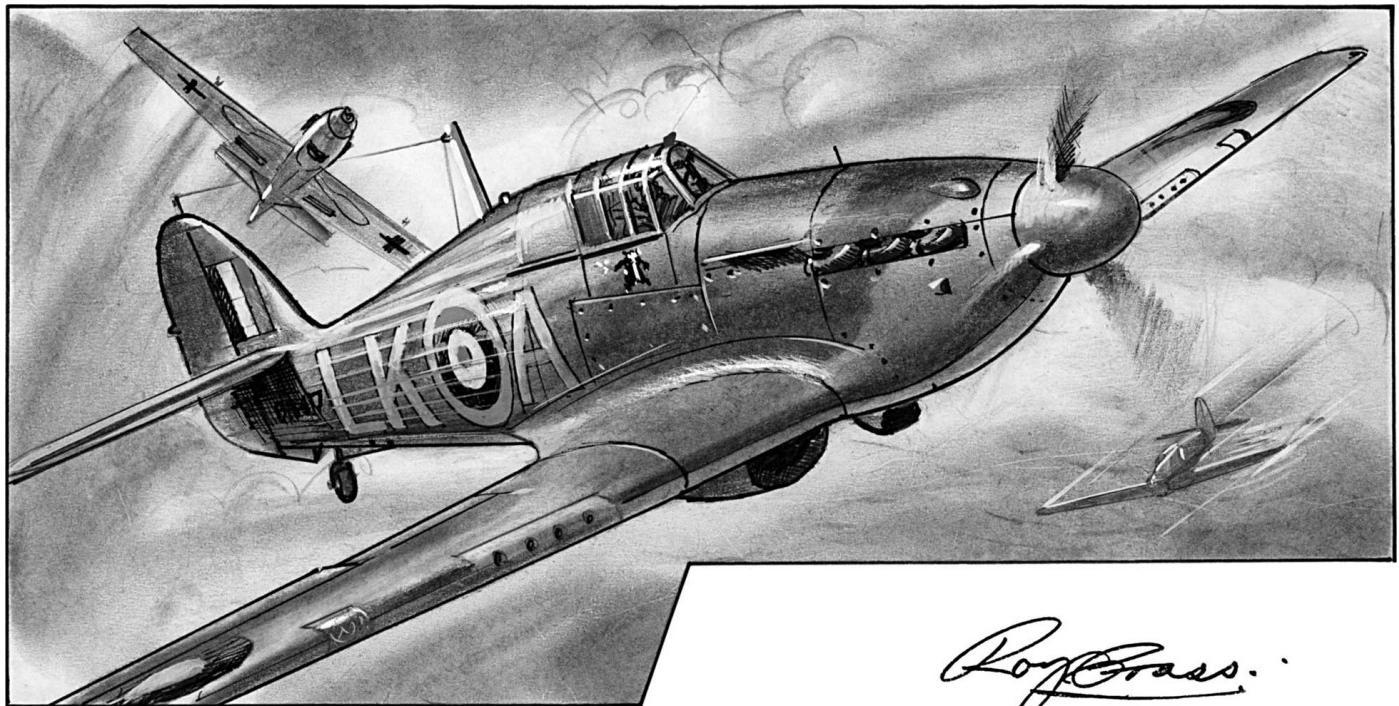
When my artwork was finished it was back to Wandsworth to have it checked out in the drawing office and then presented to the management for final approval. All that then remained was to send in the final bill! This was normally pre-arranged according to the

various box and artwork sizes.

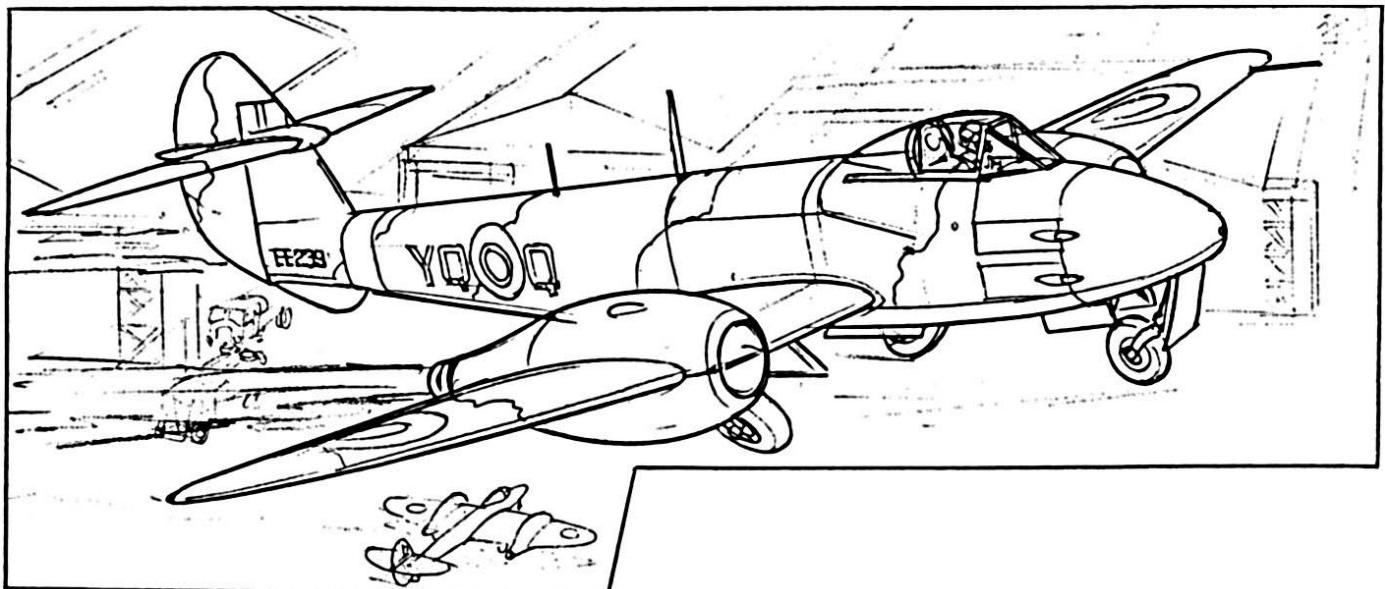


RED ARROWS Gnat

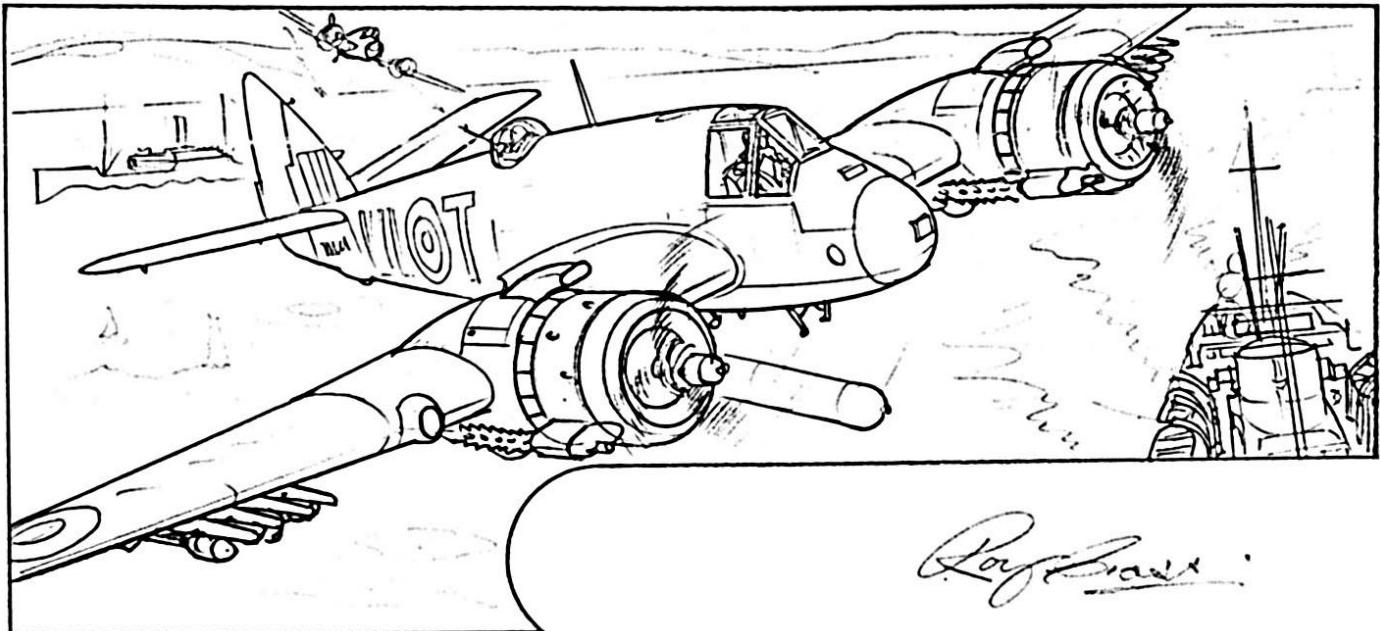
Roy Cross



Roy Grass.



*Another idea for the Gloster Meteor jet fighter kit, which can be compared with the final artwork on page 101 of The Vintage Years of Airfix Box Art. I managed to fit the Meteor into the illustration area by causing the undercarriage main wheels to begin to retract.*



*The finished art for the Bristol Beaufighter torpedo bomber for Coastal Command appeared in Celebration of Flight, but here is an alternative sketch sandwiched into the usual box top area showing how cutting off part of the aeroplane in this case, I assume, caused its refusal. Even so, it still retained plenty of 'action' with the torpedo just released from the carrier, though a bit too close to the target ship – a minor anomaly!*

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